

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

INSIDE

International meeting
assesses youth festival

— PAGE 3

VOL. 62 NO. 12 MARCH 30, 1998

Battle for independence deepens in Kosovo

Washington probes deploying NATO forces

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS
AND NATASHA TERLEXIS

PRISTINA, Kosovo, Yugoslavia — “We will give up our lives. But we won’t give up Kosovo.” This chant reverberated across the hilltops of Dragodan, a neighborhood in the capital of Kosovo here, and into the center of the city below on March 13. It captured

Eyewitness report

the determination of the Albanian majority in this region, ruled by force by the regime in Belgrade, to resist brutal repression and fight for self-determination.

Nearly 100,000 people demonstrated that day. The mobilization was called by the Independent Students Union of the University of Pristina and supported by most Albanian political parties and the Independent Trade Union of Kosovo. It had been preceded by three other large street actions since the beginning of March, some of which were attacked by the police with clubs and water cannon. It is being followed by nearly daily protests, including one by more than 1,000 Albanian women who attempted a 30-mile march from Pristina to the Drenica region



Albanians in Kosovo protest March 13 against Serbian government-organized attacks

March 16 but were blocked by the police.

Under the guise of fighting “terrorism,” Serbian police and army units assaulted several villages in that region, killing at least 85 people on February 28 and March 5, in an unsuccessful attempt to crush the resis-

tance of Albanian working people and youth in Kosovo. In the aftermath of the Drenica massacres the demand for independence of Kosovo has gained widespread support here.

While attempting to portray themselves

Continued on Page 6

Protests explode in West Bank after Israeli troops kill Palestinian workers

BY HILDA CUZCO

Thousands of angry Palestinians have taken to the streets throughout the Israeli-occupied West Bank, in a wave of protests sparked by the killing of three Palestinians by Israeli soldiers March 10.

The soldiers shot into a van full of construction workers as they were returning home from their jobs in Israel through an army checkpoint at Hebron. Two soldiers

were initially arrested, but they were rapidly freed. Israeli Brig. Gen. Yitzhak Eitan said the soldiers “acted according to army regulations,” claiming the van had attempted to run over another soldier. The army has since dropped this assertion, but maintains the soldiers acted correctly.

Palestinian security officer Lafi Ghais, who witnessed the shooting, told a Reuters reporter that the Israeli soldiers never or-

dered the van to stop. Instead, “all of sudden all we heard was shooting from three automatic weapons.”

The shooting ignited a wave of outrage. In the town of Dura, where the workers lived, the three were given a martyrs’ burial while protests continued flaring. Palestinian youths targeted the soldiers with Molotov cocktails and rocks; the troops responded with both live and plastic-coated bullets, injuring at least 35 Palestinians according to hospital workers.

In an unusual attempt to defuse the situation, Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu went on Arabic-language Israeli television March 12 and called the shooting a “tragic mistake.” Yasir Arafat, chairman of the Palestinian Authority, also tried to cool down the response, telling reporters in Gaza that the killings should “not affect the peace process.”

“We feel the peace process is over, and we are beginning a new uprising,” said 19-year-old Ibrahim Jaber, who marched in Nablus along with thousands of others.

Meanwhile, U.S. officials are discussing a negotiating proposal for the stalled “peace” talks that would include the withdrawal of Israeli troops from 13 percent of the West Bank in the next three months, provided the Palestinian Authority crack down on groups fighting for Palestinian self-determination.

In the hopes to play a more active role in the talks, British foreign secretary Robin Cook — also representing the UK presidency of the European Union — visited Israel and the Palestinian Authority in mid-March. Netanyahu, who opposes any European involvement in the talks, shortened his meeting and canceled a dinner with Cook for supposedly showing too much favor to Palestinian officials.

Communist League in Canada calls second half of convention

BY MICHEL PRAIRIE

MONTREAL — The Communist League in Canada has scheduled the second session of its Fifth Constitutional Convention, to take place in Toronto on Easter weekend, April 10-12.

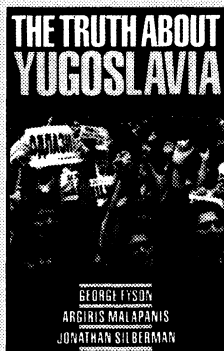
As with the first session held over New Years, this one will be combined with a socialist conference. On Saturday, April 11, under the banner of “Welcome back from Cairo and Kosovo,” the conference will feature Argiris Malapanis, staff writer for the *Militant*, and Jack Willey, organizer of the National Executive Committee of the Young Socialists in the United States.

Malapanis will report on a recent *Militant* trip in the Balkans powder-keg, and Willey will explain the growing opportunities and concrete work by the Young Socialists to help rebuild an international movement of anti-imperialist youth. The conference is co-sponsored by the Communist League and the Young Socialists in Canada. A special fund appeal will help raise contributions for the 1998 *Militant* Fund. (See ad on page 3.)

The Communist League’s convention will begin Friday evening, April 10, with a brief business session. Its work will resume Sat-

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from Pathfinder



The Truth about Yugoslavia

Why Working People Should Oppose Intervention

George Fyson, Argiris Malapanis,
and Jonathan Silberman

Examines the roots of the carnage in the Yugoslav workers state, where the U.S. and European powers are intervening militarily to advance their competing interests. Explains how groups of would-be capitalists — fragments of the former Stalinist regime — are fighting a war for territory and resources. \$8.95

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Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. When ordering by mail, please include \$3 for shipping and handling.

Cuban leader Manuel Piñero speaks on Che — pages 8-10

Dominicans demand better living conditions, higher wages

Protests are springing up across the Dominican Republic as an economic and social crisis is provoking deep unrest among working people there. Residents in Villa Mella, a town near the capital city Santo Domingo, took to the streets when the government terminated various public works programs including road repair. In Licey al Medio — about 93 miles north of the capital — a similar demonstration took place where 12 people were injured and 200 were detained. Meanwhile, workers at the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo have been on strike for a month, demanding a 20 percent wage increase. The strikers have paralyzed the university, occupying main administration buildings. The Federation of Dominican Students supports the labor action at the school where some 80,000 students attend.

S. Africa National Party rightists seek amnesty for crimes

The rightist Nationalist Party in South Africa is challenging that country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission to review a blanket amnesty given to 37 leaders of the African National Congress (ANC). The commission has the task of exposing human rights violations committed during apartheid rule. "We are not against amnesty for the 37 ANC leaders," claimed National Party head Martinus van Schalkwyk. "What we are saying is we are against a special amnesty only for ANC leaders."

The National Party, which governed apartheid South Africa for more than four decades, is trying to avoid prosecution of its leaders for the routine torture and brutality committed by its security forces.

Rightists to form gov't in India

Indian president K.R. Narayanan announced March 15 that Atal Bihari Vajpayee, leader the rightist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), will be sworn in as prime minister to lead a coalition government. The Hindu nationalist party said it will publish a joint "national agenda" with its coalition partners, which will include pursuing India's "nuclear option." The BJP will exclude from

the agenda its campaign promise to build a Hindu temple on the site of a 16th-century Mosque in Ayodhya that was demolished by Hindu rightists in 1992.

Just 21 months ago Vajpayee was forced to resign after 13 days as prime minister after failing to win support from any other party. The BJP said if their coalition allies remain loyal they can count on 264 votes in a confidence vote — eight short of an assured majority in the lower house of Parliament. Since the national elections in 1996, India's ruling class has failed to put together a stable government in the world's second most populous country.

Immigrant raids in Singapore

Singapore cops raided coffee shops, construction sites and other places March 12 arresting almost 200 "suspected immigrants." The police arrested workers from China, Thailand, Indonesia, and Bangladesh according to the Associated Press. "The raids are part of stepped-up efforts to wipe out the illegal immigrant problem in Singapore," read a cop statement. Ninety undocumented immigrants were scooped up during a 24-hour raid March 6.

Seoul will not free political prisoners who keep convictions

When South Korean president Kim Dae Jung approved a plan March 13 that would clear police and personal records of 5.5 million people, the capitalist media produced much hoopla over the releasing 2,300 inmates — some of whom were locked up for their political ideas. Woo Yong Gak, a 68-year-old man, who is possibly the world's longest-held political prisoner, is not being



Nearly 2,000 people demonstrated March 8 in Santiago, Chile, protesting that former dictator Gen. Augusto Pinochet will be sworn in as senator for life in mid-March. His 1973-90 military regime was responsible for the deaths or disappearance of tens of thousands of people.

released because he has kept his views more than 39 years. Woo was first jailed for leading a reconnoitering mission into south Korea, and has remained imprisoned for refusing to denounce communist ideas.

Only prisoners that renounce their solidarity or support for north Korea were released, with the exception of a few inmates who are older than 70. After being released, political prisoners are still punished and discriminated against by the so-called National Security Law and other regulations, which include blacklisting Koreans who so much as listen to radio broadcasts from north Korea.

Denmark: Social Democrats win

The coalition government of Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, Denmark's Social Democratic prime minister, won the March 11 elections by a 90-to-89 vote in the Danish parliament, despite widespread projections in the big-business press that they might lose. The Conservative party lost 10 seats in the elections. The election took place as 500,000 industrial workers have threatened to strike March 18 if negotiations for new collective wage agreements break down. The bosses want to place a 4 percent cap on annual pay increases.

2,000 protest rightists in France

Some 2,000 people from civil rights

groups and other opponents of ultrarightist Jean-Marie Le Pen demonstrated March 12 in Paris to counter a rally that the National Front leader planned later that day to coincide with regional government elections. Protesters marched with a banner that read, "Against national preference, priority for social justice." Le Pen uses antigovernment demagoguery to win support, tapping into the growing discontent with the high unemployment and economic disparity in France.

U.S. judge attacks bilingual ed

The California Board of Education rescinded a decades-old policy March 13 that gave non-English-speaking students the right to learn in their native language. Sacramento superior court judge Ronald Robie ruled against the state's bilingual education law, saying it expired in 1987. While conceding that native language instruction may be required by some students, he said the Board of Education was powerless to mandate districts to offer such programs. In California only 30 percent of the 1.4 million students learning English have bilingual classes, which are now put at risk by the court decision. In June the anti-immigrant Proposition 227 — which seeks to eliminate bilingual education — will be on the California ballot. Access to bilingual instruction was won through a series of civil rights battles in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Brutal Chicago cops get fired

Two white cops in Chicago, who beat an 18-year-old Black youth and then tried to cover it up, were found guilty by the city Police Board there March 12 and then fired. Last September cops severely beat Jeremiah Mearday. That same day opponents of police brutality organized a city-wide committee and later held two protests drawing hundreds of people. Following the police beating, the cops then charged Mearday, asserting he started a fight with them, but public outcry pressured the city to suspend the cops. Police Board president Demetrius Carney was forced to describe the testimonies of Matthew Thiel and James Comito Jr. as "simply unbelievable." Paul Geiger, the cops' attorney, said he is seeking an appeal.

Cabbies free inmates in Mexico

Some 500 taxicab drivers in the National Lombardista Union marched onto Ocosingo jail — some 40 miles east of San Cristóbal de las Casas in Chiapas, Mexico — demanding the withdrawal of Mexican government troops and the release of some of the prisoners. The protesters were allowed into the jail to speak with inmates. Once inside, they overpowered the guards and 46 prisoners grabbed machetes and escaped. The union has called for release of political prisoners and withdrawal of the Mexican army from the state of Chiapas.

—BRIAN TAYLOR

THE MILITANT

NATO troops out of the Balkans!

Washington is threatening to expand military operations in the Balkans under the pretext of stopping the slaughter of Albanians in Kosovo. The 'Militant' supports the fight for self-determination in Kosovo and explains how NATO expansion is aimed at restoring capitalist relations in those worker states. Don't miss a single issue!



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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the Militant's views. These are expressed in editorials.

International youth meeting in Cairo assesses festival in Cuba, world politics

BY JACK WILLEY

CAIRO, Egypt — Representatives of 33 organizations from 29 countries took part in meetings here March 5-8 to assess the 14th World Festival of Youth and Students that took place in Cuba last summer and to discuss the next steps in building an anti-imperialist youth movement.

"This festival will pass into history as a contribution of Cuba to the reshaping of the international progressive and revolutionary movement after the collapse of the regimes in the Eastern European countries" at the opening of the 1990s, said Sergio Vigoa, head of international relations for the Union of Young Communists (UJC) of Cuba. Along with Leyde Rodríguez Hernández, Vigoa represented the UJC at the gathering.

More than 13,000 delegates from 133 countries, including representatives of 2,000 youth organizations from around the globe, took part in the July 28-August 5 world youth gathering. They exchanged experiences and discussed organizing common actions upon their return against unemployment, racism, immigrant-bashing, and other reactionary anti-youth and anti-working-class manifestations of the social relations spawned by capitalism. They discussed increasing support for national liberation struggles — from Ireland to Palestine, from Western Sahara to Quebec, from Cuba's intransigent refusal to relinquish its sovereignty to Korea's battle for unification.

These anti-imperialist struggles and the response by young people to Washington's preparations to launch a war against Iraq occupied much of the discussion at the opening of the gathering in Cairo.

The event here began with a two-day meeting of the General Council of the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY), the main international organization that sponsored the youth festival. It was followed by an informal meeting to evaluate the festival in which all youth groups that had taken part in the festival were invited to participate.

In addition to the Progressive Youth Union of Egypt, which hosted the gathering, representatives to the WFDY General Council meeting from Africa included the SWAPO Party Youth League of Namibia, Sudanese Youth Union, and Democratic Youth and Socialist Youth of Morocco.

In addition to the UJC, the October 8 Revolutionary Youth of Brazil and Young Socialists in the United States took part from the Americas. Participation from Asia and the Middle East included the General Union of Palestinian Students, youth of the Tudeh party of Iran, Iraqi Democratic Youth Federation, Young Communist League of Israel, Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union of Vietnam, Socialist Youth League and Democratic Youth League of Japan, and Kim Il Sung Socialist Working Youth League of the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea.

Delegates from Europe included those representing youth groups affiliated with Communist Parties of France, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Portugal, and Russia; Young Socialists in the United Kingdom; and Socialist Youth Union of Bulgaria.

In addition to WFDY affiliates, four other organizations that had joined in organizing youth from their respective countries to attend the Havana youth festival also sent representatives to the gathering to evaluate the festival that followed the General Council meeting. These were youth of the Workers Party of Belgium, Young Socialists in Canada, youth of the Irish republican Sinn Féin, and Young Socialists in Sweden.

Debate on Iraq

General political discussion and debate took place under two points on the agenda of the WFDY leadership meeting. One was the report evaluating the work of WFDY since the last General Council meeting in Nicosia, Cyprus, in 1996. It was presented by Olivier Meier of the Movement of Communist Youth of France. The MJCF was elected to the presidency of the youth federation at WFDY's last General Assembly.

The second general discussion took place under a point on WFDY's evaluation of the youth festival.

In his report, Meier said that "the Iraqi people are suffering both because of human

rights violations of the Saddam Hussein regime and of the United Nations embargo." This was echoed by the representative of the Iraqi Democratic Youth Federation and appeared to have the support of a majority of people in the room. Meier's report mentioned the word "imperialism" only in passing and said that "in the Israel-Palestine conflict, a visit by WFDY's president gave rise to meetings with various political and youth forces involved from both sides in the struggle for peace and recognition of the Palestinian people's rights."

A few delegates joined these issues. One of the representatives of the General Union of Palestinian Students, for example, said young fighters can't talk about the "Israeli-Palestinian" conflict and "solidarity with all those struggling on both sides," but must clearly support the Palestinian struggle for a homeland.

Argiris Malapanis, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party who was part of the Young Socialists delegation from the United States, said that condemning "human rights violations of the Hussein regime" and the UN sanctions against Iraq as in some way equivalent plays into the hands of imperialism. Washington, he pointed out, is the or-

ganizing center of assaults on the people of Iraq. U.S. imperialism not only wants to "teach" the Iraqi people a "lesson" — what the "rules" are, to quote Clinton's secretary of state. Their actions also form part of the tightening imperialist encirclement of the former Soviet Union, as does NATO expansion in Eastern Europe, the occupation of Yugoslavia under the "rules" of the Dayton accord, and the U.S. rulers' drive to dominate the oil-rich Caspian Sea region and Silk Road that make up Russia's broad southern flank. All these moves are creating explosive contradictions.

These facts alone, Malapanis said, would make it urgent to organize young people to fight for all U.S. and other imperialist troops, warships, and bombers to get out of the Mideast now and for an end to NATO military intervention in the Balkans.

Anne Howie from the Young Socialists in the United Kingdom stressed that revolutionary-minded youth in the imperialist countries must begin, first and foremost, from taking on the ruling class in the countries in which they live — which in the case of the United Kingdom means focusing the fire on British imperialism. She pointed to the importance of the Irish struggle against

British occupation of the six counties. Moreover, Howie said, it was important to remember that London was the first power to use chemical weapons against the Kurds in Iraq earlier this century.

A number of delegates spoke about actions in their countries — in Europe, North America, North Africa, and the Middle East — against the recent U.S.-British military buildup in the Arab-Persian Gulf.

Assessment of festival in Cuba

Rasheed Ali of the Sudanese Youth Union presented a written evaluation of last year's world youth festival to the General Council meeting on behalf of WFDY's Coordinating Council. The document was approved at the end of the council meeting by consensus after several amendments. It described the success of the event as the revitalization of the "festival movement" as well as the traditions of the previous 13. The festival, the document read, "was a great success and a big achievement for WFDY as well as for the progressive movement all over the world."

During the discussion, several delegates said they thought the Havana festival had

Continued on Page 11

Socialist Conferences ♦ Chicago and Toronto

WELCOME BACK FROM CAIRO AND KOSOVO

Eyewitness to resistance in Kosovo and Albania

- ♦ The Dayton Accord Marches East: NATO Encirclement Tightens around Russia
- ♦ From Iraq to the Caspian Oil Fields and the Silk Road: NATO's Southern Front in Formation
- ♦ Youth in the Balkans Confront Imperialism

SPEAKER: **Argiris Malapanis**

staff writer for the 'Militant' newspaper; co-author of 'The Truth about Yugoslavia: Why Working People Should Oppose Intervention'

Rebuilding an anti-imperialist youth movement worldwide

- ♦ International Response to U.S. Aggression against Iraq
- ♦ Building on the Momentum of the 1997 Havana International Youth Festival
- ♦ Report from Cairo Conference of the World Federation of Democratic Youth
- ♦ From Ireland to Puerto Rico, from Namibia to Cuba and the U.S.: A Vanguard of Anti-Imperialist Youth Are in Contact

SPEAKER: **Jack Willey**

organizer, National Executive Committee of the Young Socialists in the U.S.

CHICAGO, SAT., MARCH 28

Docina Musa

1801 South Loomis

[between Racine & Ashland in Pilsen]

11 a.m.-noon Registration and Reception
Meet the speakers and talk with participants

12-2:30 p.m. Eyewitness to Resistance in Kosovo and Albania

[discussion will be continued following the second talk]

3:00-6:00 p.m. Rebuilding an Anti-Imperialist Youth Movement Worldwide

6:00-7:30 p.m. Dinner (catered on site)

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TORONTO, SAT., APRIL 11

Clarion Essex Park Hotel

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10 a.m.-12:15 Eyewitness to Resistance in Kosovo and Albania

12:15-1:30 p.m. Lunch

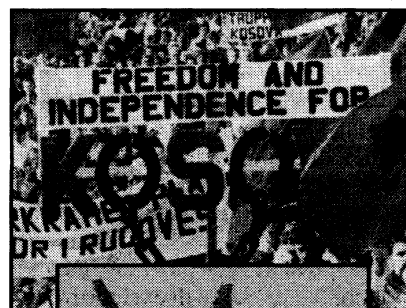
1:30-4:00 p.m. Rebuilding an Anti-Imperialist Youth Movement Worldwide

[4:30 p.m. Second session of Communist League convention resumes]

Sponsors: Communist League in Canada
Young Socialists in Canada

Special appeal for 1998 Militant Fund

Jack Willey and Argiris Malapanis will be just back from a three-week reporting trip to Egypt and Balkans for the 'Militant.'



Top: Albanians from Kosovo rally for independence. Bottom: Warplanes on U.S. aircraft carrier off coast of Iraq.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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♦

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FRIDAY, APRIL 10-SUNDAY, APRIL 12 ♦ FIFTH CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION OF THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE IN CANADA
(Open to delegates and supporters)

Building a chapter of Young Socialists

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists (YS), an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the YS write to: Young Socialists, 1573 N. Milwaukee, P.O. Box #478, Chicago, Ill. 60622. Tel: (773) 772-0551. Compuserve: 105162,605

BY GAETAN WHISTON

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — The Young Socialists (YS) chapter sponsored a Socialist Educational Weekend here in the Twin Cities March 13-14. The main presentation was a Militant Labor Forum titled "Revolutionary Cuba Today and the Fight Against the Yankee 'Indispensable' Nation" by YS leader Joshua Carroll. Carroll had recently returned from a *Militant* reporting trip to the Havana International Book Fair. Also part of the educational weekend were two classes, one on the U.S. war drive against Iraq, given by Gaetan Whiston, and the other on the history of internationalism in the Cuban revolution, given by Carroll.

Leading up to the weekend's events, the YS staffed tables with the *Militant* and Pathfinder literature on campuses, and in working-class communities; and sponsored a class on socialism and the fight against imperialism and war at St. Olaf College.

Aaron Blyth, a young worker, came to the class on Cuba's internationalism after receiving a flyer for the educational weekend at the socialists' table two weeks before. Blyth had once been part of a socialist club at his college and said he came to find out more about what is going on in politics today. "The class was an eye-opener, especially on what the Cubans are doing now, since the revolution, in their fight against imperialism," he said. Blyth bought *Socialism on Trial* by James P. Cannon and he plans on going out on sales with the YS.

Ryan Simonson, a 20-year-old student

from Minneapolis College of Art and Design, came to the Militant Labor Forum to hear Carroll's reportback from the Havana book fair. Carroll began the forum by describing imperialism's drive toward war. He said that "while today U.S. war threats are aimed at Iraq, imperialism's ultimate goal is the restoration of capitalism in Russia and throughout the Eastern European workers states." He pointed to the example of the Cuban revolution as "the answer to imperialism." He pointed to its record of fighting imperialism and linking up with others around the world who want to do the same. Simonson described this image of the Cuban revolution as "the opposite of what the media paints," which resembles a "picture of a fading revolution that deteriorates as Fidel ages." He bought a subscription to the *Militant* after the weekend's activities.

Sarah Dunne, a 14-year-old high school student, came with the YS to St. Olaf for the class they gave and attended the Educational Weekend as well. She had read *Guerilla Warfare* by Cuban revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara and had become interested in the Cuban revolution. Dunne is a defender of the Irish fight against British imperialism. She said that she is considering joining the Young Socialists. "I share a lot of its views, and I hope to be able to go back to Ireland and be part of the struggle for socialism there," she said. Dunne renewed her subscription to the *Militant* over the course of the weekend.

The Young Socialists in the Twin Cities took a goal of selling 12 *Militant* subscriptions during the current circulation drive.

They are also actively building an upcoming anti-imperialist conference, which Camilo Guevara, Che Guevara's son; Orlando Borrego, professor of economics at the University of Havana; and Juan Mari Bras, a central figure in the struggle for Puerto Rican independence, have been invited to speak (see ad on back page).

Militant Fund Drive under way

BY DAVID BERG

As *Militant* correspondents traveled from Kosovo to Macedonia to Albania, reporting firsthand on the struggles by Albanians for their self-determination (see coverage elsewhere in this issue), the international Militant Fund drive began. The \$110,000 fund-raising campaign, which runs from March 14 to May 10, is essential to continue producing the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* — socialist periodicals published in the interests of working people — including the special reporting teams such as the one in the Balkans.

The key to reaching the goals is an early start on raising money. In several cities, supporters of the *Militant* are already preparing fund-raising meetings featuring speakers on major questions of interest to working people.

Special political events in three cities will include an appeal for the Militant Fund. In Chicago, *Militant* reporters Argiris Malapanis and Jack Willey will speak at a March 28 socialist conference on the working-class resistance they witnessed in Albania and Kosovo, as well as on a youth conference in Cairo, Egypt, and the prospects for rebuilding a worldwide anti-imperialist youth movement. A similar conference will take place in Toronto on April 11. In Los Angeles, a West Coast socialist conference will feature Malapanis and Willey on the afternoon of April 4, capped off that evening with a talk by Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press, on the Cuban revolution and the place of Pathfinder in building an international communist movement.

Militant supporters in Newark are hosting a March 29 fund-raising program that will feature Ma'mud Shirvani on the growing confrontation between imperialism and the workers states in Russia and the republics around the Caspian Sea.

Organizers of these events are using them as a springboard to get momentum in winning contributions and pledges and reaching out as broadly as possible in the working-class audience that supports the *Militant*.

Raising money on the job from fellow industrial unionists is a crucial aspect of the Militant Fund. Working people are the pillar that supports the publication of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*. Socialist workers in Newark met with a longtime supporter of the *Militant* who works at the Ford plant in Edison, New Jersey, organized by the United Auto Workers union, and who gladly agreed to contribute to the fund.

Contributions can be made out to the *Militant* and sent to 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Irish fighters speak in U.S.



Militant/Megan Arney

Thousands of people heard Sinn Féin leaders Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness as they toured the U.S. East Coast March 11-18. Adams, the president of the leading party fighting to end British rule in Ireland, spoke to a crowd of 1,800 people at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey. Both McGuinness and Adams spoke to some 600 people in Queens, New York, and addressed several other community events in the region. Adams then went on to meet with White House officials in Washington, D.C., while McGuinness headed for Philadelphia.

Monthly Sales of Pathfinder Books FEBRUARY 1998

Countries/Cities	February			Previous months		
	Goal	Sales	% Sold	Jan.	Dec.	Nov.
SWEDEN	60	76	127%	63%	67%	216%
AUSTRALIA	36	42	117%	97%	36%	208%
ICELAND	8	9	113%	140%	100%	100%
GREECE	13	13	100%	0%	69%	215%
NEW ZEALAND						
Auckland	42	42	100%	31%	95%	94%
Christchurch	32	29	91%	72%	34%	57%
N.Z. Total	74	71	96%	49%	69%	81%
UNITED STATES						
Atlanta	48	73	152%	171%	81%	81%
Boston	65	98	151%	120%	154%	71%
Miami	65	97	149%	125%	112%	314%
Philadelphia	55	71	129%	75%	122%	95%
Chicago	77	96	125%	105%	61%	52%
Los Angeles	120	144	120%	60%	68%	88%
Washington, D.C.	70	79	113%	67%	96%	120%
Detroit	45	40	89%	58%	69%	44%
San Francisco	200	174	87%	57%	45%	93%
Birmingham	45	38	84%	93%	184%	51%
New York	245	192	78%	43%	45%	39%
Cleveland	50	39	78%	38%	42%	34%
Pittsburgh	63	47	75%	56%	35%	65%
Twin Cities	104	61	59%	38%	103%	59%
Seattle	80	43	54%	74%	34%	39%
Houston	65	34	52%	29%	31%	71%
Des Moines	50	25	50%	100%	110%	184%
Newark	171	80	47%	12%	16%	36%
U.S. Total	1618	1431	88%	62%	66%	77%
Goal/Should be	1800	1800	100%			
UNITED KINGDOM						
London	150	123	82%	135%	71%	77%
Manchester	56	38	68%	43%	43%	59%
U.K. Total	206	161	78%	110%	63%	72%
CANADA						
Vancouver	50	44	88%	60%	44%	171%
Toronto	80	65	81%	163%	180%	59%
Montreal	68	35	51%	38%	103%	135%
Canada Total	198	144	73%	94%	111%	111%
FRANCE	30	13	43%	77%	37%	420%

IN THE UNIONS

Unions	February			Previous months		
	Goal	Sales	Total	Jan.	Dec.	Nov.
UNITED STATES						
OCWA	22	25	114%	23%	0%	7%
UNITE	20	21	105%	50%	57%	43%
IAM	60	55	92%	48%	23%	20%
UFCW	10	9	90%	79%	131%	38%
USWA	40	35	88%	63%	50%	80%
UAW	50	41	82%	40%	46%	14%
UTU	72	59	82%	17%	14%	17%
U.S. total	274	245	89%	37%	31%	26%
BRITAIN						
TGWU	7	6	86%	29%	0%	0%
RMT	6	4	67%	17%	0%	100%
AEEU	5	1	20%	40%	120%	40%
UK total	18	11	61%	28%	33%	44%
CANADA						
IAM	7	6	86%	29%	100%	50%
USWA	22	7	32%	23%	0%	44%
Canada total	29	13	45%	24%	28%	46%
NEW ZEALAND						
EU	2	1	50%			
MWU	3	1	33%			
SFWU	1		0%			
NZ total	6	2	33%			
AUSTRALIA						
AMWU	4	0	0%	0%	25%	0%

'Militant' backers kick off drive for new readers

BY NAOMICRAINE

"Claudio Burgos, a member of the Young Socialists, sold the first sub" at a literature table at a high school, said Anita Ostling from Stockholm, Sweden, reporting on how *Militant* supporters there have kicked off their campaign to win new readers to the socialist press. "The YS here has taken a goal of selling five subscriptions to the *Militant* during the campaign."

In addition to the new *Militant* subscriber at the high school, another bought a subscription to *Perspectiva Mundial* and three bought copies of the Marxist magazine *New International* during the first three days of the international sales drive.

Supporters there, as in other places, are organizing a range of sales for the next few days — at another high school, on a college campus, in working-class neighborhoods all day Saturday, and with a special trip to an antifascist conference.

Joshua Carroll, a Young Socialist leader in Chicago, reports, "We set up a literature table at Truman College here and sold three subscriptions to the *Militant*, one subscription to *Perspectiva Mundial*, one copy of *New International* featuring the article 'The Coming Revolution in South Africa,' and several single issues of the paper."

"A young woman who bought a subscription to *Perspectiva Mundial* after seeing the headline 'Stop the imperialist slaughter in Iraq,' exclaimed to her friend, 'this is important — there is no other magazine that says this!'"

Supporters of the socialist press internationally are campaigning to sell 1,400 new *Militant* subscriptions, 450 subscriptions to its Spanish-language sister publication *Perspectiva Mundial*, and 600 copies of the Marxist magazine *New International*.

The eight-week subscription drive follows a campaign by *Militant* supporters to sell single issues of the weekly and *Perspectiva Mundial* to thousands of workers, students, and others as part of campaigning against imperialism and its war moves against Iraq and elsewhere.

Taking advantage of the heightened opportunities for discussion on what is behind Washington's aggression in the Mideast, supporters of the socialist press also took goals to sell issue no. 7 of *New International*, which includes the article "The Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's assault on Iraq," and the new booklet *Celebrating the Homecoming of Ernesto Che Guevara's Reinforcement Brigade to Cuba*.

On average, *Militant* supporters around the world met their goals for single issue sales of the news-weekly, selling 8,300 copies in six weeks. While falling short on the other targets, the regular work to reach out broadly with the socialist press has put *Militant* supporters in gear to convince many of those who bought single copies to subscribe to the *Militant* or *Perspectiva Mundial*.

Socialists in the trade unions sold more than 1,000 copies of the *Militant* and 137 copies of *New International* no. 7 to their co-workers during this period.

That can be a springboard toward meeting goals for selling subscriptions and the range of issues of *New International* between now and May 10.

Supporters of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* also sold a lot of papers outside factory gates during the single issue campaign. Many workers want to learn about each others' struggles, in the United States and elsewhere.

Ray Parsons, a member of the Steelworkers union in Des Moines, sent this report: "We sold 13 copies of the *Militant* on March 17 to workers at Titan Tire in Des Moines."

Workers were interested in coverage of the recent contract vote at Caterpillar, and told us that contract talks at Titan have just begun between the company and United Steelworkers of America Local 164.

The current contract expires April 29, 1998. Many of those buying the paper said that they hope to strike against Titan," describing the long hours and low pay there.

Supporters of the sales campaign should continue to send in stories and pictures of sales activities at plant gates, campuses, and political events.

Next week's *Militant* will print the results of the first week of the subscription drive.

Campaigning against imperialism and war

February 1 – March 15 ♦ Target percentage for final week = 100%

	Militant		NI		Dual %	PM		Che	
	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold		Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
AUSTRALIA	195	197	5	0	51%	6	11	20	23
CANADA									
Toronto	540	518	21	20	96%	8	7	40	17
Vancouver	300	315	13	10	91%	8	8	20	12
Montreal	162	124	20	12	68%	21	16	20	10
Canada total	1002	957	54	42	87%	37	31	80	39
ICELAND	40	40	3	3	100%			5	6
NEW ZEALAND									
Auckland	150	180	5	4	100%		1	20	14
Christchurch	100	111	4	3	93%			14	12
Wellington	30	34	1	0	57%			2	2
NZ total	280	325	10	7	93%			36	28
SWEDEN	92	132	8	6	109%	10	9	8	7
UNITED KINGDOM									
London	270	379	25	16	102%			40	28
Manchester	240	208	10	10	93%			20	14
UK total	510	587	35	26	95%			60	42
UNITED STATES									
Los Angeles	500	503	40	41	102%	60	69	30	32
Boston	440	458	30	25	94%	20	27	25	20
New York	750	760	60	50	92%	90	84	100	42
Washington, DC	240	257	10	7	89%	12	8	20	14
Philadelphia	300	308	15	11	88%	10	3	25	19
Miami	300	296	32	24	87%	33	33	30	23
San Francisco	360	309	36	30	85%	30	9	40	24
Des Moines	325	339	14	9	84%	30	36	17	16
Seattle	200	186	20	15	84%	5	5	25	9
Atlanta	300	304	20	13	83%	30	22	30	26
Newark, NJ	480	530	40	18	78%	80	27	30	8
Pittsburgh	200	172	13	8	74%	3	1	10	7
Birmingham, AL	200	201	15	7	74%	17	12	12	7
Detroit	200	194	10	5	74%	10	7	25	13
Cleveland	240	231	8	4	73%	8	6	20	13
Twin Cities, MN	330	316	25	11	70%	20	13	30	11
Houston	228	213	15	6	67%	20	7	15	8
Chicago	600	488	25	8	57%	40	47	50	13
U.S. total	6193	6065	428	292	83%	518	416	534	305

In the Unions

AUSTRALIA									
AMWU	24	23	3		48%			4	
CANADA									
CAW	8	8	1	1	100%			1	
USWA	44	50	12	8	90%	6	6	8	
IAM	51	63	5	2	82%			4	1
UNITE	8		1		0%			1	
Canada total	111	121	19	11	83%	6	6	14	1
NEW ZEALAND									
MWU	16	16	1	0	50%			2	1
EU	20	16	2	0	40%			2	1
SFWU	4	3	1		38%				
NZ total	40	35	4	0	44%			4	2
UNITED KINGDOM									
TGWU	36	46	5	4	104%			5	1
AEEU	24	23	3	1	65%			4	1
RMT	30	14	4	2	48%			4	1
UK total	90	83	12	7	75%			13	3
UNITED STATES									
OCAW	88	83	14	15	101%			16	4
IAM	160	166	35	32	98%	20	8	40	14
UFCW	32	25	7	7	89%	24	25	6	7
UAW	200	191	20	11	75%	7	11	30	15
UTU**	200	127	40	34	74%			20	13
UNITE	34	36	13	5	72%	22	28	16	11
USWA	175	123	40	15	54%	15	14	25	5
U.S. total	889	751	169	119	77%	88	86	153	69

** combined Militant and PM goal

Cities are ranked by the average percentage of *Militants* and *New Internationals* sold

AEEU — Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Workers Union; AMWU — Amalgamated Manufacturers Union; CAW — Canadian Autoworkers Union; EU — Engineers Union; MWU — Meat Workers Union; IAM — International Association of Machinists; OCAW — Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers; RMT — National Union of Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers; TGWU — Transport and General Workers Union; UAW — United Auto Workers; UFCW — United Food, Beverage, and General Workers Union; UFCW — United Food and Commercial Workers; UMW — United Mine Workers of America; UNITE — Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees; USWA — United Steelworkers of America; UTU — United Transportation Union.

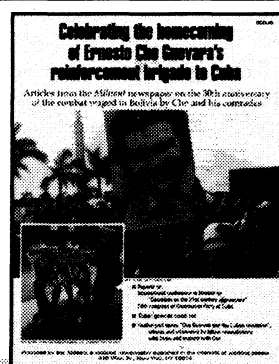
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Struggle for independence deepens in

Continued from front page

as defenders of the national rights of Albanians, Washington, Bonn and other imperialist powers are working overtime to take advantage of the turmoil to deepen the NATO military intervention into the Yugoslav workers state and tighten their encirclement of Russia.

On March 15, German foreign minister Klaus Kinkel called for the reinforcement of the 1,000-strong United Nations "peacekeeping" force in neighboring Macedonia and for the deployment of imperialist troops in Albania to "secure the border with Kosovo." The same day, government officials in Skopje, capital of the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, disclosed they are collaborating with the White House to turn an army base in southern Macedonia into a NATO training center for a new "peacekeeping" force that can be deployed in Kosovo.

During a visit to Skopje on March 17, U.S. undersecretary of state Strobe Talbott said that his government is committed to maintaining a military presence in the republic even if the UN force leaves and announced \$18 million in military aid to Macedonia and other governments in the region that cooperate with Washington. This is part of an "action plan" the Clinton administration is putting together in the Balkans, the aim of which, according to the press in Skopje, is to create a "security ring" around Yugoslavia. Washington maintains 8,000 troops in Bosnia, dominating the NATO occupation force of 30,000 in that republic.

The designs of the imperialist powers to reestablish the domination of capitalist social relations in Yugoslavia, however, and the attempt by the Belgrade regime to maintain its parasitic existence through repression are both running up against the resistance of the Albanian people.

'Blood that doesn't dry'

"This action organized today by all of us united together is a continuation of the protests that are being held all over Kosovo these days and is dedicated to the courageous people of Drenica and against the crimes and horrible massacre carried out by the Serbian occupiers," said Bujar Dugoli, president of the Independent Students Union (UPS), in addressing the March 13 rally in Dragodan, one of the largest neighborhoods of Pristina. "Using medieval practices, the Serbian occupiers have caused great bloodshed in which so many people lost their lives, among them many young people...."

"But there is a saying that blood doesn't dry and doesn't disappear especially when it is shed by the adversary in a most barbarian and inhumane way."

Bugali scolded the "Contact Group" for equating the assaults by Belgrade with self defense by Albanians. The Contact Group is made up of the governments of the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, and Russia and is charged with monitoring implementation of the Dayton accord. That was the treaty Washington forced the



Above, Serbian police block protest march by Albanian women in Pristina March 16. Washington and other imperialist powers are attempting to use repression by Belgrade regime as pretext to extend NATO military operations in Yugoslavia. At right, NATO forces stationed in Banja Luka, Bosnia.

warring regimes in former Yugoslavia to sign in 1995 on the Wright-Patterson Air Force base just outside Dayton, Ohio, paving the way for the partition of Bosnia and its occupation by NATO troops.

"The resolutions of the Contact Group speak about both the state-sponsored murderers as well as the innocent Albanian victims who were left with nothing but their bare hands to defend the thresholds of their homes, their honor, their dignity, and to claim their natural human rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," Bugoli said. "The natural right to self-defense for those facing brutal occupation is one of these human rights. Exercising this right has nothing to do with terrorism."

The student leader's points were echoed by many protesters, who were in their majority young. "We don't want mercy, we want justice," was a frequent chant.

Albin Kurti, another leader of the Students Union, said in an interview that the statements by Robert Gelbard, U.S. special envoy to the Balkans, when he visited Belgrade in February "gave the green light to [Yugoslavia's president Slobodan] Milosevic to unleash the assault in Kosovo." At that time, Gelbard praised Milosevic for his cooperation in Bosnia and branded the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK) as "without question a terrorist group."

The Kosovo Liberation Army was formed several years ago to wage an armed struggle for the independence of Kosovo. According to a number of people *Militant* reporters interviewed, it is based in the rural areas and has taken responsibility for attacks on the police since its founding. Serbian authorities claimed to have destroyed much of the UCK during their assault in Drenica. A UCK statement distributed to the press here March 10 said the "Liberation Army is determined to continue its struggle for Kosovo's liberation."

'We are all UCK'

"We are all UCK," was one of the popular slogans at the March 13 protest. "UCK! UCK! UCK!" chanted many people, using the initials of the Kosovo Liberation Army in Albanian. Many referred to those who died in Drenica resisting the assault as heroes, not victims.

"How can they claim that children are terrorists?" said Mohammed Jasheffi, a hotel worker. More than a dozen of those killed were children. Adding insult to injury, Serbian authorities refused autopsies and buried the bodies of the deceased in a mass grave during the March 5 sweep. On March 11 dozens of their relatives dug up the bodies and reburied them individually at the same spot, outside the village of Prekaz, with Muslim ceremonies.

The demands of the March 13 protest included calls for the demilitarization of Kosovo and the removal of Serbian police units that reportedly amount to 45,000 troops, the prosecution of those responsible for the killings, and the immediate lifting of the siege of Drenica.

On the way to the Drenica region March 14, *Militant* reporters passed through five checkpoints guarded by heavily armed police, with armored personnel carriers in some cases. The sandbag bunkers at these checkpoints are now being replaced with more permanent structures. Reporters are allowed into most villages at the moment, though some are still off limits. The movement of

Albanians is greatly restricted, however. Merchants are not allowed to bring food or other goods into the region and even most shipments of medicine have been halted.

The mountainous region is made up of 50 villages with 65,000 inhabitants; 99 percent of whom are Albanian and have a history of militant struggle for their national rights. A decade ago, about 3,000 were employed at an ammunition factory on a hill overlooking Prekaz, as well as at grain elevators, and textile and toy plants. Virtually all of these facilities have been shut down, though, and most residents live off subsistence farming and help from relatives who have emigrated to Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, and other countries.

The wave of police raids

"The first killings took place November 25," said Hajnishahe Shala, who works at the Human Rights Center in Srbica (which Albanians call Skenderia), the largest town in the region. That's when police with armored personnel carriers surrounded the village of Laushe and began shooting indiscriminately, she said, killing the 11-year-old son of someone they accused of being a UCK member. Teacher Halit Geci was also shot dead inside his classroom, and others were wounded. "Since then Drenica has been surrounded by heavy police forces who took over the ammunition factory and have turned it into their barracks."

On January 22 Serbian policemen attacked the home of Saban Jashari with grenades and heavy gunfire. He had been convicted in absentia by a court of membership in the UCK. "Fortunately no one was killed that day," Shala said. "Family members fought back. They would have been killed if they hadn't resisted." Frustrated by being pushed back, the cops began beating villagers indiscriminately and shooting at random from their posts in the ammunition factory, killing 52-year-old Husen Manholi, a factory worker, later that morning. As tensions mounted Serbian authorities imposed economic sanctions, prohibiting the transportation of food and other necessities for grocery stores. Farmers could no longer get supplies. "The economic sanctions have been in place ever since."

Most of the police sweeps were carried out under the pretext of trying to arrest convicted felons. During three trials in 1997, Serbian courts tried and found guilty in absentia 40 people on charges of belonging to the UCK, sentencing them to between 10 and 20 years in prison.

In these clashes, six Serbian policemen were killed in January and February, according to Belgrade. The Milosevic regime used this to justify the February 28 attack on the villages of Qirez and Likoshan, where 24 Albanians were killed and several more wounded. "When the bodies came back from the morgue in Pristina, several were missing limbs, eyes, and teeth," said Shala. Photos provided by the Independent Students Union showed the brutality by the Serbian authorities.

The heaviest assault came five days later at the village of Prekaz, home to nearly 700 families. Eyewitnesses who escaped said more than 1,000 soldiers attacked with tanks and artillery. Lower Prekaz, in the valley below the ammunition factory, is now in ruins. Part of the village was guarded by the



police and men in civilian clothes armed with assault rifles, and no photographs were allowed there. In upper Prekaz, on the facing hilltop, a number of farmers had returned to their houses after fleeing the assault in the early morning hours of March 5.

Agim Maliqi, one of these farmers, showed *Militant* reporters tractors and other machinery destroyed in the raid. All of the houses had been ransacked, furniture broken, and passports and other personal documents torn up. "This is Serbia," was painted on mirrors and some walls along with the nationalist Serb emblem.

"We are farmers. We are poor. We don't have guns. But we won't be intimidated into leaving our land," Maliqi said. About 13,000 people have reportedly fled the region and are being housed by working people in nearby towns that are not under siege. Unlike what imperialist powers have been predicting so far — and have been using to justify "peacekeepers" in Macedonia and to probe their possible deployment in Albania — refugees have not been streaming over the borders as of now.

In Mitrovica, a mining town about 10 miles north of Prekaz, Shashivar Begu, secretary of the miners union, said that unemployed miners and others there have given shelter to refugees from Drenica. "We are taking care of them," he said. "They are determined to go back as soon as conditions permit. We won't allow ethnic cleansing in Kosovo."

Earlier in Prekaz, Latif Maliqi, Agim's brother, said he had been trying to eke a living off the land after being fired from a job with a construction company in Croatia eight years ago. "I've tried to go back three times since and I've been turned back by force," he said. "What the Serbian regime did in Kosovo was the spear point of the breakup of Yugoslavia."

Origins of conflict in Kosovo

Kosovo was an autonomous region of the Republic of Serbia until 1989, when the Milosevic regime revoked its status and imposed a state of emergency that has remained in place since. Ninety percent of its population of 2.1 million are of Albanian origin, 8 percent are Serbs, and the rest are

Caterpillar workers to vote on new contract

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

Almost one month after soundly rejecting Caterpillar's contract offer, UAW members will be voting on a new contract offer this weekend. According to the union, Caterpillar has agreed to bring back all the "illegally terminated" UAW members fired by the world's largest maker of construction equipment.

The earlier offer proposed that only 110 of the 160 "illegally terminated" would get their jobs back. The refusal to bring back all the fired workers was the main reason the contract was rejected, although many UAW members were unhappy with other aspects of the contract offer, including two-tier wages for new hires.

Reports indicate that the new contract will be essentially the same, except for the provision on bringing back all of the fired workers. See next week's issue for further coverage.

—CALENDAR—

MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON

Socialist Educational Weekend. Class: Sat., March 28, from 2 to 4 p.m.: Socialism and Feminism: Lessons from the Russian, Cuban, and Nicaraguan Revolutions and The Spanish-Cuban-American War and a Century of Anti-Imperialist Struggle. Class: Sun., March 29. The Worldwide Capitalist Disorder and Increasing Working-Class Resistance. 780 Tremont St. Donations: \$15. for entire conference. \$2 for each class, \$7 for dinner. For more information, call (617) 247-6772.

Kosovo, Washington probes to intervene

Turks, Gypsies, and other nationalities.

The autonomy status was granted in 1974, following a series of protests demanding a republic. "It was a step toward fulfilling the promises Tito made during the revolution, but was not adequate," said Haidar Hyseni, 75, a retired wood worker at the March 13 protest in Pristina. "Kosovo should have been a republic from the beginning of the revolution by the Partisans."

The Partisans, led by the Communist Party whose central leader was Josip Tito, united toilers from every nationality behind the struggle against Nazi occupation in World War II, including Albanians like Hyseni. Putting into practice a program that called for mutual equality and respect for all nationalities, and that opposed chauvinism and the domination of one nation by another, was a factor in the Partisan victory against the Nazis. Hundreds of thousands of working people who had joined the Partisans turned the victorious antifascist struggle into a social revolution. By the end of 1945, they had put in power a workers and farmers regime that by the late 1940s had nationalized the means of production, distributed land to the poor peasants, and instituted a monopoly of foreign trade and economic planning — in short establishing a workers state, even if deformed at birth by Stalinist domination.

In the years that followed, Albanians were recognized as a distinct national group for the first time, their language became one of Yugoslavia's official languages, and Albanians won the right to education in their own language. The University of Pristina, where all courses were taught in Albanian, was opened in 1970.

While affirmative action measures were taken to develop the more economically backward regions of Yugoslavia in the early years of the revolution, these steps affected Kosovo less. As a privileged bureaucratic caste crystallized its hold on power under the Stalinist misleadership of Tito, the initial gains of the revolution began to be undermined. Kosovo remained far behind in economic development compared to other regions, including neighboring Macedonia. This has continued to fuel the struggle for a republic, including mass protests at the end of the 1960s that led to the granting of autonomy in 1974.

"Autonomy was a compromise that worked for a decade," said Lulëzon Jagxhiu, 22, a leader of the Independent Students Union. "Not becoming a republic, however, made the change somewhat cosmetic. It was easier to take away," he stated. Jagxhiu pointed to the 1986 revision of the Yugoslav constitution, half a decade after Tito's death, that abolished the territorial defense units in Kosovo, which were made up overwhelmingly by Albanians. This was a widely held view among a number of students and others interviewed by the *Militant*.

Tito had opened up the Yugoslav economy to foreign investment and loans from imperialist bank trusts acting through institutions like the IMF long before other regimes in Eastern Europe adopted similar policies. So when the first worldwide recession hit in the mid-1970s, the gyrations of the capitalist market system adversely affected Yugoslav working people too. This fact, combined with the bureaucratic, anti-working-class methods of planning and management by the Stalinist regime, produced an economic crisis that was the worst in the least developed areas like Kosovo. By the mid-1980s, for example, unemployment throughout Yugoslavia averaged 14 percent. It was 27 percent in Macedonia and 50 percent in Kosovo.

Nationalism unleashed

After militant strikes and demonstrations for better economic conditions and recognition of national rights broke out at the end of the 1980s in Kosovo, Belgrade cracked down, revoking autonomy in 1989. Pristina was the city where Milosevic launched his nationalist tirades to justify grabbing territory and resources for the layer of the ruling bureaucracy loyal to him. Prejudices against ethnic Albanians have been widely promulgated by the regime ever since.

The Independent Trade Union of Kosovo (BSPK) was formed in July 1990 by miners, construction workers, and other unionists who were disillusioned by the unions dominated by the former Communist Party,

which were not seen as representing the interests of workers of Albanian origin. "Our union has a membership of 254,000," said BSPK president Hajrullah Gorani in an interview in Pristina. "But only 40,000 are employed today."

After an eight-day strike in August 1990, all but 300 of the 7,600 miners in Kosovo were fired from their jobs. Over the next two years most other industrial workers who are Albanian were also dismissed.

Cut off from unemployment or other social programs, Albanians survive often with food sent from the countryside or from assistance by relatives abroad. About 400,000 have emigrated since 1990.

"In 1991 ... some 1,000 professors and 27,000 students were forced out of the University of Pristina alone," said a March 13 statement by the Independent Union of Students. They refused to teach or get lessons in Serbian. "Hundreds of thousands of high school students were banned from entering school buildings. In some of the elementary schools, children were allowed into segregated buildings — with Serb children on one side, Albanians on the other. The university and high schools began to hold classes out-

side their school buildings, in private houses, in miserable conditions. This has been going on for seven years now. The Serb police raids on these buildings are a common practice. Teachers are beaten in front of the children as a way to promote fear."

In 1992 elections that were not recognized by Belgrade, Ibrahim Rugova of the Democratic League of Kosovo was elected president of the Republic of Kosovo, which had been declared two years earlier by the Albanian members of Kosovo's parliament. Rugova, a literary critic who had been a member of the former governing Communist Party, set up a parallel government to the one loyal to Belgrade but promoted dialogue with the Milosevic regime and opposed street protests.

"There was a lull in struggle between 1992 and last year," Jagxhiu said. Frustration with the lack of any progress led to the formation of the UCK and the student protests that erupted last year. In 1996, Milosevic signed an agreement with Rugova under which schools, including the university, were supposed to reopen with instruction in Albanian. "This agreement was never implemented," Jagxhiu said.

New turning points in struggle

"That's why we launched the protests last year," Jagxhiu continued, talking to *Militant* reporters at the offices of the Independent Students Union, on the top floor of a three-story apartment building in the Velanija neighborhood of Pristina. It is one of the main organizing centers of the resistance to the Serbian regime. The students organized three large demonstrations in Pristina on October 1, October 29, and December 30. Smaller actions took place in four other cities where the parallel university has branches.

"The October 1 action was a watershed event," Jagxhiu said. "It broke the ice after five years of passive resistance." More than 20,000 students attempted a march from Velanija to the center of the city, while tens of thousands of others lined the sidewalks in support. The police blocked the march and, after the students staged a sit-in, attacked the protesters and arrested a number of the organizers. They were released after being beaten and threatened with prison sentences if they continued the actions.

"We were simply demanding the return

Continued on Page 14

WEST COAST WELCOME BACK FROM KOSOVO, CAIRO, AND HAVANA Socialist Conference • Los Angeles, April 4, 1998

Registration and Reception 11 a.m.—noon

Meet the speakers and talk with participants

12 noon—2:30 p.m.

EYEWITNESS TO RESISTANCE IN KOSOVO AND ALBANIA

- The Dayton Accord Marches East:
NATO Encirclement Tightens around Russia
- From Iraq to the Caspian Oil Fields and the Silk Road:
NATO's Southern Front in Formation
- Youth in the Balkans Confront Imperialism

Speaker: **ARGIRIS MALAPANIS** staff writer for the *'Militant'* newspaper; co-author of *'The Truth about Yugoslavia: Why Working People Should Oppose Intervention'*

[discussion will be continued following the second talk]

3:00—5:30 p.m.

REBUILDING AN ANTI-IMPERIALIST YOUTH MOVEMENT WORLDWIDE

- International Response to U.S. Aggression against Iraq
- Building on the Momentum of the 1997 Havana International Youth Festival
- Report from Cairo Conference of the World Federation of Democratic Youth
- From Ireland to Puerto Rico, from Namibia to Cuba and the U.S.:
A Vanguard of Anti-Imperialist Youth Are in Contact

Speaker: **JACK WILLEY** organizer, National Executive Committee of the Young Socialists

Dinner (catered on site) 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Evening session 7:30—10:00 p.m.

CUBA IN 1998 — 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DECISIVE BATTLES OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

- Cuba and Puerto Rico: 100 Years of Resistance since the First War of the Imperialist Epoch
- Havana Book Fair: Politics and Publishing — the Truth about the Past Is a Weapon for Today and Tomorrow
- The Place — and Weight — of Pathfinder Press in Reknitting a Communist Vanguard

Speaker: **MARY-ALICE WATERS**, president, Pathfinder Press; editor of *'Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War: 1956—58'* by Ernesto Che Guevara

Sunday, April 5, 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

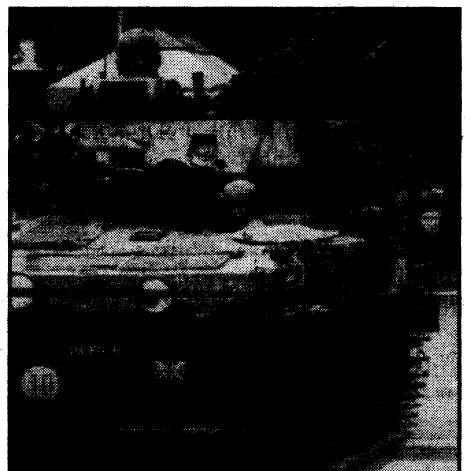
Special California State Nominating Convention of the Socialist Workers Party (Open to delegates and supporters)

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Young Socialists National Committee: (773) 772-0551



TOP: PATHFINDER STAND AT HAVANA BOOK FAIR, FEBRUARY 1998. BOTTOM: NATO TROOPS IN BANJA LUKA, NORTHWESTERN BOSNIA.

Special Appeal for 1998 Militant Fund

Jack Willey and Argiris Malapanis will be just back from a three-week reporting trip to Egypt and Balkans for the *'Militant'*. Mary-Alice Waters recently returned from a reporting trip to Cuba and the Eighth International Book Fair in Havana.

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'Che's anti-imperialist strategic concept coincided fully with Cuban revolution'

Manuel Piñero answers questions on Guevara's campaigns in Congo, Bolivia

In July 1997 a special issue of *Tricontinental* magazine was published in Cuba, devoted to the Argentine-born Cuban revolutionary Ernesto Che Guevara, commemorating the 30th anniversary of his combat in Bolivia. The highlight of issue no. 137 was an interview with Manuel Piñero. There, Piñero spoke about many of his experiences in the 1960s working closely with Guevara, including various episodes not publicly known. As the interviewers pointed out, Piñero "alluded to the fact that though he has met with journalists before, this is the first time in 30 years he has agreed to be interviewed about Che Guevara."

Tricontinental is the magazine of the Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America (OSPAAAL), founded in January 1966 by the Tricontinental Conference in Havana. The inaugural issue of the magazine in April 1967 featured Guevara's last major political article, "Create Two, Three ... Many Vietnams — That Is the Watchword," also known as the Message to the Tricontinental. In it Guevara discussed the world political situation and explained why it was necessary to build an "international proletarian army" and launch a Latin America-wide revolutionary struggle.

The interview with Piñero was reprinted in whole or in part in a number of publications around the world. Among them was the *Militant*, which published it in the Nov. 24 and Dec. 1, 1997, issues. It was subsequently reprinted by the *Militant* in the booklet *Celebrating the Homecoming of Ernesto Che Guevara's Reinforcement Brigade to Cuba*. The special issue of *Tricontinental* is available from Pathfinder in English and Spanish, as is the booklet that reprints a series of articles from the *Militant*.

In September 1997 OSPAAAL and *Tricontinental* sponsored an international conference in Havana titled "21st Century:



Top: Cuban Council of State, Office of Historical Affairs
Manuel Piñero (left) was a founder of the July 26 movement, whose aim was to overthrow the U.S.-backed Batista tyranny in Cuba and open the revolutionary transformation of the country. Above, combatants of Rebel Army in Sierra Maestra, February 1958. In front, left to right: Calixto García, Lázaro Soltura, Efigenio Ameijeiras, Piñero (kneeling), Fidel Castro, Félix Lugones (Pilón), unidentified, Raúl Castro, and Arturo Lince.

The Legacy and Relevancy of Che's Works." Due to the interest sparked by the Piñero interview, *Tricontinental* organized — as one of the highlights of that conference — a public discussion with Piñero. For several hours the Cuban leader answered questions from an audience of more than 100 participants that included a number of foreign journalists. The slightly abbreviated transcript of that meeting, which took place Sept. 27, 1997, was reviewed by Piñero and edited for publication in issue no. 138 of the magazine. Piñero was on hand when it was

launched in Havana on March 3, the week before his death. An English edition of *Tricontinental* issue no. 138 is in preparation and will be available shortly.

As the introduction to the article prepared by Luis Suárez Salazar notes, after a few introductory remarks to the conference Piñero responded "to about 20 questions related to Che's revolutionary course of action. In large part his statements were designed to respond to the fallacies spread by those interested in breaking the indestructible trilogy between Fidel, Che's interna-

tionalist efforts, and the consistent international and Latin American policy of the Cuban revolution."

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Question: We have read with much interest what you said in issue no. 137 of Tricontinental about how Che, at a certain moment, considered the possibility of going to fight in Nicaragua, Colombia, or Venezuela. Could you elaborate on this?

Piñero: As early as the opening months of 1959, Che was in contact with a group of Nicaraguan exiles who had come from Mexico — among them Tomás Borge (who is here) and the former lieutenant Somarriba. He offered them all possible support at a time when Cuba's security and solidarity apparatus was in its earliest stage.

One of the Cuban comrades who participated in that effort, Carlos Lugo, who is still living, took a message from Che to Somarriba in which Che said, more or less, that if Somarriba and his column managed to set themselves up in Nicaraguan territory, he would fulfill the commitment he had made. According to Lugo, this commitment — signed in a very friendly way, without giving his name, as "He who helps you" — foresaw the incorporation of Che in the struggle of the Nicaraguan people against the Somoza dictatorship. That effort could not materialize because the Honduran army (with the participation of some of Somoza's officers) destroyed part of the expeditionary force. Two Cuban comrades — Onelio Hernández Taño and Marcelo Fernández Isla — died there along with a number of Nicaraguans. Notwithstanding this, Che subsequently aided other groups of Nicaraguan revolutionaries, one of which was led by the brothers Harold and Alejandro Martínez,

Piñero: more than 40 years of revolutionary struggle

BY MIKE TABER

Manuel Piñero, a leader of the Cuban revolution for more than four decades, died on March 12 in an automobile accident in Havana. He was 63 years old.

Piñero was known by friends as "Barba Roja," or "Red Beard," due to the color of his beard in his youth. The revolution's enemies tried for decades but were never able to turn the nickname into a term of derision.

A native of Matanzas province east of Havana, Piñero came from a well-off family. In the early 1950s his father, the Matanzas representative of the Bacardi rum trust, sent him to the United States to study business at Columbia University. In 1955 he returned to Cuba and was among the founders of the July 26 Movement, the revolutionary organization led by Fidel Castro. The movement's aim was to overthrow the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista and begin a revolutionary transformation of the country.

Division General Samuel Rodiles Planas,

second in command of Cuba's Western Army and one of Piñero's fellow combatants in the revolutionary war, gave the farewell speech at his graveside in Havana on March 13. He said Piñero was one of the outstanding activists of the youth brigade of the July 26 Movement in Matanzas. His intense efforts helped prepare for the landing of the *Granma* expedition that launched the armed insurrection against the dictatorship. Piñero eventually became head of the July 26 Movement in Matanzas, before being moved to Havana.

In May 1957 the leadership of the movement decided he should join the Rebel Army, led by Castro, in Cuba's Sierra Maestra mountains in southeastern Cuba.

In 1958 Piñero participated in forming the Rebel Army's Second Eastern Front under the command of Raúl Castro. Within the Second Front, he became head of the Directorate of Personnel and Territorial Inspection, the Intelligence Service, and the Rebel Police. By the war's end in January

1959, he held the rank of commander.

Following the victory over the Batista dictatorship, Piñero served as commander of the Moncada garrison in Santiago de Cuba, the country's second-largest city, and head of Rebel forces in Oriente province.

In mid-1959 he was transferred to Havana, where he assumed major responsibility for the Rebel Army's Directorate of Intelligence, later known as G-2.

This body played a crucial role in the fight against the counterrevolutionary war organized by Washington to overthrow the new workers and peasants government and reimpose the rule of Cuba's capitalists and landlords. Hundreds of small armed units were organized in Cuba in the early 1960s to carry out terrorist acts and appeal for direct U.S. military intervention. These bands were defeated by the mobilization of thousands of Cuban working people in the armed forces and militia. One key weapon was the revolution's ability to infiltrate the counterrevolutionary bands and to track down and apprehend their members. This effort was organized by the intelligence network that Piñero helped lead.

Another of its responsibilities was to protect the country from the numerous U.S. sabotage and assassination efforts aimed at the revolution and its leaders.

When the Ministry of the Interior was founded in 1961, Piñero became its deputy minister, continuing his responsibilities in the leadership of Cuba's intelligence operations. He held this post until 1975.

Within the Ministry of the Interior, Piñero also held the post of head of the General Directorate of National Liberation. In that capacity he collaborated with revolutionary forces throughout the Americas. He "was a valuable anonymous collaborator of Commander Ernesto Che Guevara in his internationalist missions in other lands of the world," Rodiles noted. During the

early 1960s, virtually every left-wing leader from Latin America who passed through Cuba met with Guevara and Piñero. Among them were fighters from Nicaragua, Colombia, Guatemala, and elsewhere who later took up arms against the dictatorships in their countries.

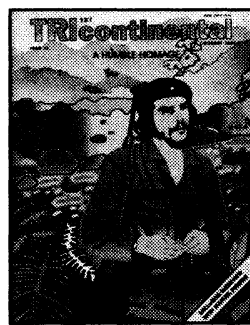
The Cuban revolution offered its assistance to these fighters and many, many others. Cuban veterans of the revolutionary war volunteered to personally assist these efforts, with the support and encouragement of the Cuban government. When Guevara himself went to Bolivia in 1966-67 to lead a revolutionary movement against that country's military dictatorship, Piñero was Cuba's top liaison officer and organized its logistical support to the effort.

In 1975 he became head of the Communist Party Central Committee's Department of the Americas, a responsibility he held until 1992. Piñero was a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba from its founding in 1965 until 1997.

One measure of the effectiveness of Piñero's work on behalf of working people of the world was the special hatred he earned from the Cuban revolution's enemies in Washington. This hatred — as well as grudging respect — could be seen clearly in the obituary that appeared in the March 13 *New York Times*, referring to Piñero as "the ruthless but urbane spymaster," "a cunning and dangerous foe," and an "espionage wizard."

Among the articles he wrote was "National Liberation and Socialism in the Americas," published in English in 1984 in *New Internationalist* no. 3.

"With the death of compañero Manuel Piñero Losada, our party has lost an active member and the revolution one of its veteran soldiers," said Rodiles. "He left us his trajectory, his memory which cannot be erased, and his unforgettable friendship."



Tricontinental

Special issue on Che Guevara
Now available in English and Spanish

Issue no. 137 contains articles and interviews commemorating the 30th anniversary of Guevara's death in combat in Bolivia. Features interview with Cuban leader Manuel Piñero and articles by Harry Villegas (Pombo), Leonardo Tamayo (Urbano), and many others speaking of Guevara's internationalist efforts in the Congo, Bolivia, and other parts of the world. \$5.

Arriving soon!

Tricontinental issue no. 138. Features presentations from September 1997 conference "21st Century: The Legacy and Relevancy of Che's Works," including those by Manuel Piñero, Tomás Borge, Eusebio Leal, Mary-Alice Waters, and others. Available in Spanish. \$5

Available at bookstores listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

and another was headed by Enrique Lacayo and Julio Alonso. On Che's instructions, the Cuban Renán Montero, who is still living, took part in the latter effort. Both groups sought to organize armed struggle in Nicaragua, from Honduran territory.

But regardless of the details, what I want to stress is that from the first days after the triumph of the Cuban revolution, Che was already thinking about carrying out what he considered to be his historic commitment to participate in the liberation of other peoples of our continent. That's why he also committed himself beginning in 1962 to participate and lead, along with Jorge Ricardo Masetti, the effort to initiate a guerrilla struggle in Argentine territory (referred to in the interview published in issue no. 137).¹ These facts help refute the commonly told lie that Che left Cuba, first for the Congo and later Bolivia, due to his "irreconcilable differences with the revolutionary leadership of our country."²

Venezuela and Colombia came later. In his frequent meetings with revolutionary leaders from those countries, Che explored the possibility of participating in guerrilla struggles that were developing there. In my opinion, I think he wanted to initiate and lead his own effort and, above all, guide it toward the Southern Cone, specifically to Argentina. He felt very anxious to carry out that commitment to his people and to our peoples. He could not stand to sit comfortably behind a desk while other compañeros fought and died trying to put some of his ideas into practice.

Q: What can you tell us about Che's solidarity with the struggles of the peoples of Paraguay and Puerto Rico?

A: He always paid very close attention to the revolutionary struggle of the Paraguayan people, so much so that in early 1959, with the help of other compañeros from "Ciro Redondo" Column no. 8,³ he personally participated in combat exercises with a group of Paraguayan combatants who were then training in Cuba. Che also helped various Puerto Rican independence leaders. I can assure you that he — like Fidel and the Cuban revolution — continually expressed his immense sympathy and solidarity toward the anticolonial struggles that were taking place in the early 1960s on that sister Caribbean island. He especially admired the late compañero Pedro Albizu Campos.⁴

Q: Some of Che's biographers have claimed that he lacked the most basic knowledge of the situation in Africa and in par-



Tricontinental

The contingent Ernesto Che Guevara commanded in Congo "and other solidarity activities with the peoples of Africa were the product of consistent policy" of Cuba's revolutionary leadership, said Piñeiro. Above, Cuban fighters Víctor Dreke, Rafael Zerquera, and Che in Congo in 1965. Piñeiro "was a valuable anonymous collaborator" of Guevara in his internationalist missions, noted Division General Samuel Rodiles.

ticular the Congo. What is your opinion on this?

A: I have read some commentary in this regard. I don't wish to judge the intentions of the authors. But it must be remembered that before joining the struggle in the Congo, Che had traveled through a number of African countries, and he personally knew many leaders of revolutionary movements and several progressive heads of state in the region. Che was not unaware of what was happening in Africa, or of the difficulties created for the anti-imperialist struggle by the social, tribal, ethnic, and cultural conflicts that characterize the majority of African countries. Not to mention the negative qualities of some of the leaders of the so-called Supreme Council of the Revolution of the Congo.

His diary, and his *Episodes of the Revolutionary War in the Congo*,⁵ make clear that Che sought to broaden his knowledge of the characteristics of the area where the Cuban contingent operated, of the features and capabilities of the Congolese and Rwandan leaders, as well as the best banner under which to advance the revolution in that central African country. In spite of his will, the abrupt interruption of that solidarity effort kept him from concluding his investigations on this.

I want to emphasize one point: Che had an anti-imperialist and tricontinental strategic conception that fully coincided with the policy of the Cuban revolution, which in turn was the source of the decision that he would command the Cuban contingent that went to what is now known as the People's Republic of the Congo. Contrary to what some biographers have said, this was not a individual decision. This and other solidarity activities with the peoples of Africa were the product of the consistent policy toward that part of the world, developed from that period onward by Fidel and the revolutionary leadership of our country.

Q: What role did you play in the preparation of Che's internationalist effort in Bolivia?

A: As first deputy minister of the Ministry of the Interior, I was responsible for all activities aimed at determining the "operative situation" — to use the term from official language — in that country and neighboring countries, immigration controls, passports, and the documents necessary to guarantee the clandestine transfer of compañeros to Bolivian territory. Likewise, we took responsibility for surreptitiously getting Che out of Tanzania, for attending to him and his security while he was living clandestinely in Czechoslovakia, as well as organizing the routes and details of his subsequent trip from Cuba to Bolivia.

As with other countries in Latin America, Asia, or Africa, the team that I headed up took responsibility for reviewing the available information on the political, economic, and social situation in Bolivia. We oversaw the initial contacts with leaders of the Bolivian revolutionary organizations (first of all with the members and leaders of the Communist Party) who had made a commitment to support the internationalist effort commanded by Che. We also organized the training of a number of Bolivian

compañeros in Cuba. I think that these were the basic things. Perhaps with the passage of time — at an appropriate political moment — other actions that we carried out in Latin America, Europe, and other parts of the world aimed at supporting the revolutionary strategy of the Heroic Guerrilla can be made public.

Q: What did the CIA and FBI know about Che's activities in Africa and Latin America? Did Che and the incipient Cuban solidarity apparatus you headed deceive the U.S. special services?

A: From what I've been able to read over all these years — including various statements by former high CIA officials, as well as information from sources friendly to our country — they lost Che's trail in Africa. Faced with that reality, they unleashed a systematic campaign to create a state of uncertainty about his whereabouts. In an operation very similar to the one they are currently waging, they began using all means at their disposal to spread slanders about how Fidel had jailed or murdered Che, or how Che had been expelled from Cuba due to disagreements with the top Cuban leadership. In addition to creating confusion in the revolutionary ranks during the 1960s, these actions were designed to learn Che's possible destination. Compañero Fidel maintained strict silence. The only thing he would ever say was that Che was in the right place and that he was making revolution. In that way he waited for the best moment to announce the exact place where Che was fighting.

Perhaps the CIA and the FBI had some clue as to Che's presence in Latin America. The facts, however, showed that they had no prior information on the plan, the sending of a number of Cuban comrades to Bolivia, much less the logistical resources that

were sent there. If they did, then why didn't they stop any of these actions? Another proof that the CIA and the enemy's special services were deceived is that compañeros Renán and Tania were in Bolivia. In spite of the fact that Tania unfortunately was unable to accomplish the main task assigned to her, she lived there without her real identity being revealed, until unforeseen circumstances led to her joining the incipient guerrilla detachment.

Q: Can you offer us an assessment of the quality of the logistical support assigned to Che's internationalist effort in Bolivia? As you know, some biographers accuse Cuba of failing to make available the necessary means for an effort of that scope.

A: The logistics had to be obtained in Bolivia itself, sending equipment from Cuba proved to be very difficult. The weapons of the guerrilla unit were the same as those used by the Bolivian army. It is true — as has been said — that the communications equipment that the compañeros in Bolivia were able to obtain were inadequate for the needs at that initial stage of the struggle, when the mobility of the guerrilla unit demanded that each combatant prioritize the essential munitions and food. We must remember that one of the laws of guerrilla struggle is to seize and use the weapons, munitions, equipment, and provisions of the enemy forces. Otherwise, the development of the guerrilla detachment will depend on the difficult, if not impossible, task of getting supplies from abroad. As was proven in the Cuban experience, what makes the guerrilla unit superior is the moral quality of its fighters combined with the appropriate strategy and tactics, including the use of surprise. With some exceptions, the quality of the weapons, equipment, or logistics of the insurgent forces will always be inferior to that of the enemy forces. Anyone who thinks or says otherwise knows nothing about irregular warfare.

Q: The biography of Che written by U.S. journalist John Lee Anderson⁶ states that there is still a big mystery surrounding who decided to initiate the guerrilla struggle in Bolivia. Other biographers — such as Mexican intellectual Jorge G. Castañeda⁷ — claim that it was commander Fidel Castro who "sold" that idea to Che, in order to solve the "ambiguous" situation he had been left in following the defeat in the Congo. What can you tell us?

A: I repeat that the decision to undertake the guerrilla struggle in Bolivia and from there extend it to Peru, Argentina, and other countries in the Southern Cone, was entirely

Continued on Page 10

SWP: 'Piñeiro's deeds will be emulated by the best fighters'

Below we reprint a message sent to the Communist Party of Cuba by Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes on behalf of the party's National Committee on March 13, 1998.

Dear Comrades,

Compañero Manuel Piñeiro Losada was one of the leaders of the Cuban revolution whose tireless efforts and willingness to shoulder great international responsibility in the struggle for national liberation and socialism became legendary in his lifetime. These efforts won him the admiration and respect of revolutionary fighters worldwide. The deeds that gained him and the leadership of the Cuban revolution the confidence of internationalist fighters everywhere, at the same time earned him the special hatred of humanity's greatest enemy, the ruling powers of the United States of America. This was an honor he bore with characteristic humor.

Piñeiro's combat boots will be filled by others, of course, who are called upon to rise to his standards of discipline, accountability, and boldness to meet challenges as great as any the Cuban Revolution, and those who strive to follow its example, faced in his lifetime. Through these battles to come, Barba Roja's contributions to the history of the struggles of the modern working-class movement will continue to be redeemed. His deeds will be emulated by the best of current and future generations who unflinchingly place the revolutionary goals and efforts of our epoch ahead of material comfort or life itself.

We extend our firmest solidarity to his comrades and our deepest condolences to his family.

Comradely,
s/ Jack Barnes
National Secretary
on behalf of the National Committee
of the Socialist Workers Party

¹ A guerrilla nucleus in the Salta mountains of northern Argentina operated from late 1963 to early 1964 led by Jorge Ricardo Masetti, an Argentine journalist who lived in Cuba after the revolution and founded the Prensa Latina news agency. The plan for the operation foresaw Che's eventual participation in the undertaking. In early 1964, however, the Argentine guerrillas were wiped out by government troops and Masetti was killed.

² Guevara led a contingent of over 100 Cuban volunteers to the Congo in 1965 to aid the anti-imperialist struggle by supporters of the late prime minister Patrice Lumumba. In 1966–67 he led a guerrilla movement in Bolivia against that country's military dictatorship. He was captured by the Bolivian army in a CIA-organized operation on Oct. 8, 1967, and murdered the following day.

³ This was the Rebel Army column commanded by Guevara in 1958.

⁴ Pedro Albizu Campos was a leader of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party. He was imprisoned by the U.S. government for over 20 years for proindependence activities. He was released from prison just prior to his death in 1965.

⁵ Major excerpts from Guevara's unpublished manuscript on the Congo are included in the recently published book by William Gálvez, *El sueño africano de Che* (Che's African dream), now available from Pathfinder in Spanish.

⁶ *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life* (New York: Grove Press, 1997).

⁷ *Compañero: The Life and Death of Che Guevara* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997).

Cuban leader on Che, internationalism

Continued from Page 9

Che's. He took into account and had full confidence in the information we sent him through various channels from Havana, which were passed on to him directly by the Cuban comrades (such as Martínez Tamayo, Harry Villegas, and Renán Montero), as well as the information sent to him by Tania. All of these compañeros had previously been sent by him to Bolivia on different missions. But each and every one of the decisions was made by Che: the plan, the strategy, the selection of the Cuban combatants who accompanied him, each of the preparatory steps, the Bolivian and Latin American political organizations — initially from Argentina and Peru — that were contacted, and so on.

Those of us who knew him were aware that he had a lot of experience, not only from the responsibilities he had assumed in building our socialist state, but also as a military leader and a guerrilla leader. That experience was enriched in the Congo. That's why everything was studied and discussed with him. He always asked for and listened respectfully to the opinions of others — even when he disagreed with them — and he liked to debate and give thought to each decision. He sought out different points of view. In spite of his desire to begin the struggle as soon as possible, and the fact that he was a man of strong temperament, passion, and will, he was nevertheless very demanding, meticulous, and cold-blooded in his analysis ... I would say that he was very objective, precise in all his thinking, particularly when it came time to make a decision.

That's why I have no doubt that apart from all the support we gave him as a state — on compañero Fidel's orders — Che used his own methods and channels to verify the most important information we sent him. And this is logical, since in examining the circumstances of any country there can be subtleties, discrepancies between different sources of information, different conclusions reached by various compañeros, etc. And Che was very careful about that. As we say in Cuba, "He never swung at the first pitch, he would wait for the best one to hit."

Q: Considering that Che was responsible for planning and organizing all the details of the development of the guerrilla struggle in Bolivia, what is your analysis of the mistakes he made and of the causes of the failure of the Bolivian experience?

A: Much has been said and written about that. As for the causes of the defeat of the Bolivian guerrilla movement, I think there were several. First of all, the early discovery of the location of the rear guard and the premature beginning of guerrilla operations. As is known, a movement of this type must first get itself established, create ties, explore

the terrain. It has to get the combatants seasoned and find out their capacity to withstand and adapt, and their willingness to continue the struggle, above all to continue it in the initial stage, which is always the most difficult. Before these minimum conditions were met, and while Che was away on an exploratory journey, the fighting began in Nacahuazú. As a result, the existence of the guerrilla camp was revealed, all the plans were prematurely set into motion, and

reduced number of men, Che was circling around in an inhospitable area, making successive attempts to reunite with the group led by comrade Vilo Acuña (Joaquín). Now it may be analyzed whether this was correct or not, but I am sure that it was a decision made, among other reasons, out of Che's humanism and comradeship, and not for military reasons. In his mind it was unthinkable to abandon any compañero. That excessively delayed his plan to move to north-

Q: It has been asserted very strongly that conditions did not exist in Bolivia for the development of the guerrilla struggle. What is your opinion 30 years later?

Based on what is known about the way events unfolded, I'm aware that some "historians" believe that Che, or the leadership of the Cuban revolution, did not take into account the objective and subjective situation and the relationship of forces that existed in Bolivia at the time. Others term that effort "voluntaristic," "foquista," and "militaristic." I disagree with these opinions. I sometimes ask myself, what would these same "historians" have said if Fidel had been killed in the Moncada attack or at Alegría de Pío,⁹ and had been unable to continue the insurrectional effort right then? I'm sure they would also have said that the Cuban revolution was impossible, that the objective and subjective conditions did not exist, or that Fidel was a "putschist," a "vanguardist," or an "adventurer."

Historical analysis cannot be reduced to a few epithets and insults ... Think about the subsequent course of Bolivia's political situation, for example. There was an upsurge of struggle against the dictatorship that was already under way among the miners and students beginning in 1967 (I spoke about this in the interview that appeared in issue no. 137 of *Tricontinental*). Furthermore, barely three or four years later a broad nationalist, antidictatorial, and popular movement unfolded, headed by the late general Juan José Torres and other important political figures of the Bolivian left. Leaving aside its own errors, this effort could only be crushed by a merciless attack by the political and military

right wing, supported by the United States.¹⁰

This demonstrates that beginning in the second half of the 1960s, big economic, social, and political contradictions were ripening in Bolivia, including within the ranks of the military itself and in the high command of the army. In addition, a will to struggle against the traitors of the 1952 revolution was being created.¹¹ All these forces needed to be organized and forged into a vanguard. Had the guerrilla movement led by Che been able to survive the difficulties of its initial stage, it had the potential to play such a role. I believe that Che grasped this situation like few others, and he concluded that the minimum conditions existed to begin the guerrilla struggle. As he conceived it, the remaining objective and subjective

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"Big economic, social, and political contradictions were ripening in Bolivia" in mid-1960s. Right: Che Guevara at guerrilla camp in Bolivia. Struggles by working people exploded across Latin America over following years. Above, scene from 1969 cordobazo, the uprising that shook Argentina's third-largest city.



they had to begin fighting in an area that lacked the social and political conditions for the development of guerrilla struggle. This facilitated the gradual tightening of the encirclement by the 10,000 Bolivian soldiers involved in the confrontation with Che's small detachment.

Second, Che tried to get Régis Debray and Ciro Bustos out of the zone of operations.⁸ He knew that the army was going to wage an intense effort to locate, confront, and surround the guerrilla unit. For this purpose, and faced with the fact that some comrades were sick and others had little willingness to fight (he termed them "the rejects"), he divided the detachment with the aim of reuniting in 15 or 20 days. That was not accomplished, reducing the firepower and combat capability of the column, which nevertheless obtained several military victories. Unfortunately, for six months, and with a

ern Chapare, an area of operations closer to La Paz and with much better social, political, and topographical conditions than those where the guerrilla unit operated.

Thirdly, all the commitments previously made by the various Bolivian forces, both with Cuba and with Che, were not fulfilled, either quantitatively or qualitatively. One of the causes of this, as is recognized today by the leadership of the Bolivian Communist Party, was the negative stance taken by Mario Monje, who was then its general secretary. This disoriented, disorganized, and demobilized many members of the party and its youth group, who, as was later proved, were ready and willing to join the struggle. The urban network, which was being built in various cities of Bolivia on Che's orders, was hard hit before it was ready, and the channels of communication, both within Bolivia and with Cuba, were unable to function. Logistical support was interrupted, as was the possibility of obtaining Bolivian reinforcements. This included some 20 comrades from that country who had already received training but were unable to leave Cuba. Those of us who have participated in guerrilla struggle know that in the initial phase, the guerrilla unit is compelled to rely primarily on its own forces and resources. Nevertheless, the support of the urban network is always necessary.

This whole situation conspired against the possibilities for the Bolivian detachment to survive. But in addition, no examination of this type can ignore the fact that elements of chance always come into play. Everything does not occur in a preestablished way. Sometimes accidents — even though they are not decisive in the end — condition the evolution of political or military events. There is more than one example of this in the history of the world, Latin America, and Cuba.

Finally, I want to stress that I evaluate the Bolivian experience as a whole, and therefore I do not characterize it as a total failure. All of us would have wanted Che's Latin American undertaking to have achieved great triumphs. Had this been the case, the situation in Latin America, and perhaps the world, would be different today. But even though from an objective standpoint it turned out to be a defeat in military terms, it constituted without a doubt a great moral, political, and ideological victory. It has put Che, the internationalist, forward as an example to millions of men and women in the world who raise the revolutionary banner.

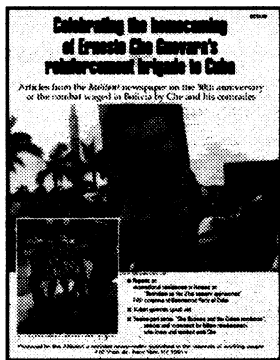
⁸ Debray, a French writer, and Bustos, an Argentine artist, had gone to the guerrilla camp in Bolivia in March 1967 at Guevara's invitation to discuss international support work for the guerrilla movement. The two were trapped in the zone of operations after the onset of combat, and were arrested in April.

⁹ On July, 26, 1953, the Moncada army garrison in Santiago de Cuba was the site of an insurrectionary attack, together with the garrison in nearby Bayamo, by 160 fighters led by Fidel Castro. The combatants failed to take the garrisons, and over 50 captured revolutionaries were murdered. Castro and 27 other fighters were subsequently captured, tried, and sentenced to up to 15 years in prison. Alegría de Pío was the first battle of the Cuban revolutionary war in December 1956, in which the Rebel forces were taken by surprise and almost wiped out.

¹⁰ Riding a wave of popular mobilization in Bolivia in 1970-71, a People's Assembly — an incipient workers' parliament — was formed in 1971. Following months of wavering and indecision by workers leaders, right-wing military forces overthrew the Torres government. A wave of murderous repression followed.

¹¹ A powerful, revolutionary mass upsurge in Bolivia in 1952 resulted in nationalization of the largest tin mines, legalization of the trade unions, initiation of land reform, and the elimination of the literacy requirement that had effectively disenfranchised the majority of Bolivia's people, the Aymará- and Quechua-speaking population. But Bolivia remained one of the most impoverished countries of the Americas. The increasingly corrupt and fractured government of the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR), a bourgeois party that initially had strong support from Bolivia's superexploited tin miners, was overthrown by a military coup in 1964.

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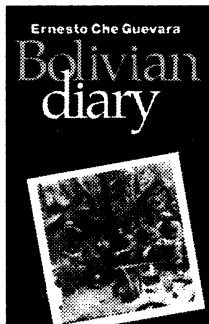
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International youth meeting in Cairo

Continued from Page 3

registered a departure from the organizing methods of previous festivals, and they considered this a problem. The representative of the Free German Youth (FDJ) of former eastern Germany said in his remarks, as well as in a written statement distributed at the meeting, that the "14th festival was characterized by chaos that has never occurred before in the international youth movement in the last 50 years. The vast majority of delegates were not chosen by a selection procedure as was done in the previous 13 festivals. Many delegates seemed to be political tourists rather than representatives of organizations of the youth."

In Germany three committees organized people to go to the festival, and no one organization controlled who attended. Two coalitions organized several hundred people to go from the United States. In Canada, a group based in Montreal sent a contingent from Quebec, dominated by supporters of Quebec independence. This was organized in addition to the other delegation from Canada. And in Ireland, where the National Preparatory Committee headed by the Workers Party objected to the participation of Sinn Fein, the Irish republican group organized its own separate delegation.

Sergio Vigoa of the UJC said that the fact that no one group from any country could veto who would take part in the festival reflected its nonexclusionary character, one of its great strengths. "It was also the first self-financed world youth festival held," Vigoa added, "in a unipolar world and a socialist country subjected to a cruel U.S. blockade."

Maureen Hinda of the SWAPO Party Youth League of Namibia and several other delegates made similar points.

"This was a new kind of festival that should be repeated in the future," said

Nguyen Hai Anh of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union of Vietnam.

A number of these youth leaders said that without the initiative of the UJC and the Cuban Communist Party to host the gathering in Cuba, and to organize for delegates to stay with Cuban families, this kind of festival could not have happened.

Most participants reported that dozens of youth who went to the international youth gathering subsequently got involved in political activities in their countries for the first time — from defense of the Cuban revolution to mobilizations against unemployment to activities demanding the reunification of Korea.

Workshop discussion

The Informal Meeting to Evaluate the 14th World Festival of Youth and Students, which followed the WFDY General Council meeting, focused for the most part on proposals for where to hold the next international youth festival. Because relatively few organizations not already affiliated to WFDY had been organized to participate in this gathering, the discussion was not as rich as it could have been, and the session ended a half day ahead of schedule.

Afterwards, however, political discussion continued in three workshops. The workshop on Korea issued a resolution in WFDY's name demanding withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Korea and supporting the Korean people's struggle for reunification.

A second workshop focused on the Sudan. The third, entitled "Youth against Fundamentalism," was addressed by a representative of the Sudanese Youth Union and Refat Said, general secretary of the Progressive Party of Egypt.

In the eyes of many Arab youth, Said stated, the crumbling of the Soviet Union



Militant/Argiris Malapanis

The world youth festival in Cuba, August 1997, included a number of sessions like the one above where delegates discussed anti-imperialist struggles in their countries, as well as work being done in solidarity with Cuba.

means that socialism has failed. He compared Islamic fundamentalist organizations in the region to the Nazis in Europe. During the discussion, a representative of the MJCF in France labeled the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in Algeria as fascist and called on the government of France and other European countries to ban organizations that raise funds for groups such as the FIS.

Malapanis from the United States pointed to how the capitalist politicians and big-business media in the United States and other imperialist countries try to make "Islamic fundamentalism" synonymous with "terrorism" and use it to justify attacks on democratic rights of working people, especially Arabs. Banning such groups and their supporters only plays into their hands and restricts the space youth and all working people have to organize.

Malapanis pointed to the example of the Bolsheviks in the early years of the Russian Revolution and how they championed the rights of the Muslim peoples of the East, without retreating one inch from a histori-

cal materialist understanding of religious institutions and their hierarchies as props of class oppression.

Mun Chol from the Korean delegation said that it wasn't socialism that had failed but opportunism, revisionism, and vulgar Marxism. An uncompromising fight against imperialism and for socialism is the alternative that must be presented to young people the world over, he insisted.

Next world youth festival

Toward the beginning of the discussion earlier in the day at the Informal Meeting to Evaluate the 14th World Festival of Youth and Students, Valeri Azestov of the youth section of the Russian Communist Party raised the proposal that his organization host the 15th festival in Moscow. He said the National Preparatory Committee organized for the 14th festival in Russia was broad and is still in place, ready to begin working on the next one. Among the organizations he listed as affiliated to the committee is the youth of the Liberal Democratic party — the party of ultrarightist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, which many people in the room considered an unwelcome surprise. Among the reasons Azestov gave for hosting the next festival in Russia is that it would help his party win more seats in parliament "where 50 percent of the seats are now controlled by left-wing parties." The representative of the Democratic National Youth Federation of Nepal proposed that the next festival be held in Katmandu, Nepal, to coincide with the turn of the Western millenium. The Communist Party there recently won parliamentary elections with a large majority.

Maureen Hinda of the SWAPO Party Youth League (SYL) talked about the anti-imperialist tribunal at the festival in Cuba as one of the highlights of that youth gathering. She said U.S. imperialism above all, but also to a lesser degree French, British, and Portuguese imperialism, are intensifying the exploitation of peoples of the Third World today, especially in Africa, by penetrating these countries deeper under the guise of "development." She pointed to the importance of the aid of Cuban volunteers in winning Namibian independence and in aiding other national liberation struggles in the region.

Hinda urged that the next youth festival be held in Africa, where none of the previous WFDY-initiated festivals has ever been held. The SYL is proposing Namibia, she said, and SWAPO, the governing party in Namibia, has already expressed support for this proposal. The UJC and a number of other WFDY affiliates are collaborating with the SYL to help make this possible, she added.

A few participants spoke in favor of the Namibia initiative. No one commented on the other two proposals. At the conclusion of the meeting, WFDY president Olivier Meier said further consultations around the world will be needed before a final decision is made. This will be taken up at the next WFDY General Assembly meeting — the highest decision-making body of the federation with representatives of all member groups. The General Council decided to schedule the next WFDY General Assembly meeting for January 28–31, 1999, in Nicosia, Cyprus.

Jack Willey, the organizer of the National Executive Committee of the Young Socialists in the United States, headed the YS delegation from the U.S. to the Cairo gathering.

Piñeiro speaks on internationalism

Continued from Page 10

conditions would mature as the revolutionary armed struggle unfolded, including as a result of it.

The same could be said about the political situation in Peru and Argentina. Less than a year after Che's death, a movement of nationalist officers broke out in Peru, with important backing from progressive sectors.¹² Despite its limitations, this movement shook the traditional forms of domination by the oligarchy and imperialism. And in Argentina, a few years later various powerful popular movements were born (the *cordobazo* and *rosario*)¹³ as well as dynamic political-military organizations (such as the Revolutionary Army of the People [ERP] and the Montoneros), which could be destroyed only by one of the most brutal campaigns of repression ever seen by that country and the entire continent. No less than 30,000 persons and hundreds of fighters from among the people were murdered or disappeared. If Che had been able to continue developing his strategic plan, I am sure that many of these compañeros would have joined his struggle. Remember that his was not a short-term strategy. It assumed that the struggle for national and social liberation of these countries would last 10, 15, or perhaps 20 years, above all because he always foresaw the probable intervention by imperialism.

Q: What role did Régis Debray play? Was he the "beginning of the thread" that led to pinpointing the location of the guerrilla unit?

A: There are various versions. Some compañeros allege that Debray revealed Che's presence in Bolivia. However, the information we possess — which is quite extensive, even if there are still some facts to verify — indicates that what Régis did, in the difficult situation he found himself in, was to confirm the information already supplied to the Bolivian army by some lower-level deserters, and above all by everything given them by the Argentine Ciro Roberto Bustos. The latter made drawings of each of the members of the guerrilla unit, and gave an immense quantity of facts, providing the enemy with very precise information on the guerrilla unit's camp, its compo-

sition, and its weaponry. What Debray does seem to have revealed for the first time, was Che's strategic plan of extending the guerrilla struggle from Bolivia to other South American countries, that is, the continental character of the movement undertaken in Bolivia.

The negative positions taken by Debray in recent years, his "repentance" of the revolutionary struggle, his direct or indirect connections with persons today who want to throw mud on the figure of Fidel, on Cuban socialism, and on our revolution's support to Che's internationalist efforts, cannot lead us to ignore the facts I have mentioned. It would not be ethical on my part, without proof, to assign Debray responsibility for pinpointing the guerrillas' location, much less for Che's death. As the saying goes, "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."

Q: According to the biography written by Jorge G. Castañeda, Che had a martyr complex. What is your opinion of such a statement?

A: I have read it. He also says Che had a mystical affinity, and he tries to explain all of Che's acts by what he calls a "*fuite en avant*."¹⁴ I don't know if this is a literary term or a psychological concept, but all of us who were acquainted with Che know that he did not seek death, but rather victory of the revolutionary cause. He was very altruistic and daring, so much so that compañero Fidel termed his audacity his "Achilles' heel."

In my opinion — and this is shared by other compañeros who were with him in the guerrilla effort in Bolivia — these were personality traits that led him to play an active role in the battle of the Yuro ravine. In this, as on many previous occasions in the Sierra Maestra and the Las Villas campaign — Che, rather than pull back, remained in the front line to slow up the attack of a Bolivian unit and thus facilitate the retreat of the other compañeros, in particular the ones who were ill. One can ask oneself today whether or not this was correct, but for him it was very difficult to abandon compañeros in such a state. This does not mean that he went around seeking death. What he certainly was

seeking was to preserve the maximum guerrilla forces in order to reorganize them and continue the struggle.

Something else that disproves this "psychoanalysis" is that even when he was wounded, with his carbine put out of action, and with no bullets for his pistol, Che tried, with the help of a Bolivian compañero, Willy Cuba, to break out of the encirclement and meet up again with the other compañeros at a prearranged site. Che was a man who defended his life, conscious of what it signified for the revolutionary plan of action, and he was determined to sell it very dearly to our enemies. It's true that he did not fear death and that he was prepared like few others to face it. But that is different from stating that Che had a propensity to martyrdom.

Q: Was an escape route or a plan to rescue Che envisioned ahead of time? If so, what prevented such a plan from being carried out?

A: The idea of a supposed "rescue plan" for Che in Bolivia that was not implemented because compañero Fidel did not authorize it, is one of the many lies propagated — with the clear support of our enemies — by Daniel Alarcón, alias Benigno.¹⁵ He raised this af-

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¹² In 1968 Gen. Juan Velasco Alvarado led a military coup in Peru. The Velasco regime nationalized the country's oil fields and initiated a land reform.

¹³ In May 1969 a general strike erupted in Rosario, Argentina's second-largest city, followed by a massive uprising in Córdoba, the third-largest city. The *cordobazo* ushered in a period of rapidly sharpening class struggle in Argentina. Only after the workers movement failed repeatedly to resolve the conflict in its interests did the struggle culminate in a 1976 military coup, followed by years of the infamous "dirty war" waged by the dictatorship of Gen. Jorge Rafael Videla, in which thousands of Argentines are estimated to have been killed or "disappeared."

¹⁴ A surge forward, no matter what the obstacles.

¹⁵ Alarcón, a Cuban veteran who fought with Guevara in Bolivia with the nom de guerre of Benigno, defected from Cuba in 1996.

Canada: Communist League holds convention

Continued from front page

urday afternoon following the socialist conference, and conclude before supper Sunday afternoon.

The Saturday convention session will open with a special presentation by the Socialist Workers Party leadership on the international effort by supporters and friends of the communist movement worldwide to transfer every single Pathfinder book and pamphlet into digital format. This project, which is necessary to produce books using computer-to-plate technology, is decisive for Pathfinder's ability to keep its more than 350 titles in print in coming years and to maintain its printing facility into the 21st century.

Che's combat in Bolivia

Continued from Page 11

ter betraying the Cuban revolution and the ideals he fought for together with Che. These arguments reveal his frustrations and resentments, and the way he is being manipulated by the enemies of the revolution. We note his trips to the United States to offer his services to the CIA and to the imperialist campaign against Fidel and the Cuban revolution.

What Benigno and the authors of these fallacies suggest is that Cuba should have declared war on Bolivia, that it should have sent a unit or a commando squad, thousands of kilometers away, to a landlocked country, transporting tens or hundreds of thousands of men by air to rescue Che. Such a thing is seen only in adventure movies....

Furthermore, I think that those who have spread such a hoax forget one basic thing: no one who is fully and consciously involved, as was Che, in guerrilla struggle or in revolutionary combat, maps out a rescue plan in the eventuality of failure. For this reason neither Che in Bolivia nor Fidel in Cuba ever envisioned ahead of time any rescue plan. Che went to Bolivia with the determination to fight, to win or to die. As I stressed in the interview already mentioned, he was optimistic about the possibility of carrying out the revolutionary plan of action, given the conditions of Bolivia and the Southern Cone of Latin America. And he believed that as the project grew, it would receive the solidarity of all progressive sectors of Latin America and the world.

As I already said, the only thing approximating a plan or an "escape route" foreseen by Che was to head toward another region of Bolivia where there were better conditions to develop the guerrilla struggle. He certainly would have done this, even if all he had left was a handful of combatants. I'm convinced that regardless of the circumstances, Che would have made all efforts to reorganize and reinitiate the struggle, just as Fidel did in Cuba after the "shipwreck" of the *Granma*,¹⁶ and above all, the disaster of Alegría de Pío. Remember that when it appeared he had only seven men and five rifles, Fidel said, "Now we've really won the war!" Che had this same spirit, this same strategic optimism.

Those who believe in "escape routes" and "rescue plans" mapped out ahead of time, apparently project onto others — as the psychologists would say — their own cowardice, inadequacy, and pragmatism. But fortunately we revolutionaries are not so pragmatic. We are inspired by different values and principles. We have confidence in victory. We try to make great ventures possible at all costs. The more difficulties they entail, the more interesting and attractive they look to us. This is what Fidel and the Cuban revolution have demonstrated each and every day. And it is proved by the life of all men and women who, like Che, know how to conquer immortality.

¹⁶ The name of a yacht used to transport 82 members of the July 26 Movement, including Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, to Cuba to begin the revolutionary war in November–December 1956.

tury.

The main political and organizational report from the Communist League leadership will review the progress of the party branches and industrial trade union fractions in reconquering the proletarian axis of their political work among workers, youth, and other fighters. This was the central question addressed by the first session of the convention. It has been sharpened by the experience of the Maple Leaf strike along with others.

Among other issues, the convention will assess the Communist League's working-class campaign over the last few months, responding to Washington and Ottawa's

preparations for war against the people of Iraq, the expansion of NATO, and steps to tighten the imperialist noose around Russia. The convention will also take up the growing polarization of bourgeois politics in Canada in response to the heightened resistance by Quebecois to their national oppression, and the recent efforts by the communist movement to help open the bridge between this resistance and that of labor across the country. It will conclude with the election and introduction of a new Central Committee and a political summary.

Branches of the Communist League and chapters of the Young Socialists are discussing how to bring as many co-workers, youth,

other fighters, and supporters and friends of the communist movement in this country as possible to this important working-class political weekend.

"There won't be any national trade union fraction or regional educational gatherings of the communist movement in the United States that weekend," said SWP national secretary Jack Barnes. "This is an opportunity for YS and SWP members from the upper Midwest and Northeast to participate in the Toronto conference and to follow through to the end the work begun by the first session of the Communist League convention that many of them were able to observe last January."

Workers prepare for contract fight at Case Corp.

Continued from front page

Strom's application process. They confirmed that the outfit was lining up replacement workers for Case.

The UAW contract with Case expires March 29, and covers 3,300 workers at plants in Burlington, Iowa; Racine, Wisconsin; East Moline and Burr Ridge, Illinois; and St. Paul, Minnesota. Workers at the Burlington facility told the *Militant* that a key issue in the negotiations is opposition to the company's demands for mandatory overtime.

Case is also recruiting scabs in Burlington and in Peoria, Illinois.

Jeff Vance distributed flyers to build the union rally inside the tire plant, and management got wind of the action. "I was told that that type of literature is not allowed on company property ever, ever again — which made me want to do it again," he said.

The local's rally attracted new workers from Bridgestone/Firestone as well as strike veterans. One worker, hired last October and still on probation, said he came "because the company is more powerful than a single worker, but together we are stronger than them. When something like this rally is going on, we can let others know about the fight."

Two UAW Local 450 members who work at the John Deere Des Moines Works joined the rally. The UAW signed a new, six-year contract with Deere, another major producer of heavy equipment, earlier this year. The agreement included a deep two-tier wage scale.

The steelworkers set up a picket line outside the office of Strom Engineering, and offered flyers condemning the scab recruiting to passersby.

Wilson and others reported receiving a

very warm response, except from those in business suits.

One worker, who asked that his name not be used, walked by and joined the picket line. He had just gotten a job at Titan, another tire factory in Des Moines, organized by USWA Local 164. Local 310 protesters welcomed him and explained that the contract at Titan expires in April, so the action in support of Case workers is good preparation for a possible fight at Titan as well.

Two TV news crews, WHO radio, and a reporter for the *Des Moines Register* covered the protest. The reporter for TV Channel 5 told Steelworkers that Strom executives had "no comment" on the unionists' rally.

Ray Parsons is a member of USWA Local 310.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

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Opposing the Rise of U.S. Imperialism in WWII. Speaker: Tom Leonard, Socialist Workers Party, member of the maritime union during and after World War II. Sat., April 4, 7:30 p.m. Dinner 6:30 p.m. 137 N.E. 54th St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (305) 756-1020.

GEORGIA

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From Iraq to the Caspian Sea Region: U.S., NATO Moves Against the Russian Workers State. Speaker: Ma'mud Shirvani, National Committee, Socialist Workers Party. Frequent speaker on politics in Iran, Central Asia and the Turkish Republics. Sat., April 4, 7 p.m. Dinner 6 p.m. 803 Peachtree NE. Donation: \$5. Dinner: \$5. Tel: (404) 724-9759.

ner: \$5. Tel: (404) 724-9759.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

Women's History, Our Future: What We Can Learn from the History of Women's Equality in the U.S. and Cuba. Speaker: Elizabeth Stone, editor of *Women and the Cuban Revolution*, airline worker and member of the International Association of Machinists. Sat., March 28, 7:30 p.m. 780 Tremont St. (corner of Massachusetts Ave.) Donation: \$5. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

MINNESOTA

St. Paul

Puerto Rico: The Fight Against Imperialism in the United States' Last Colony. Panel discussion. Fri., April 3, 7:30 p.m. 2490 University

Ave. W. Donation: \$4. Tel: (612) 644-6325.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

The Fight for Quebec Independence and the Crisis of Canadian Imperialism. Fri., March 27, 7:30 p.m. 1405 E. Madison. \$4. Dinner: \$4. Tel: (206) 323-1755.

NEW ZEALAND

Christchurch

Book Fair in Havana. Speaker: Patrick Brown, Communist League and participant in the International Book Fair in Havana. Fri., March, 27, 7 p.m. 199 High St. (corner High St. and Tuam). Donation: \$3. Tel: (3) 365-6055.

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SWEDEN

Stockholm: Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. Compuserve: 100416,2362

Nuclear planning — The Dept. of Energy said its project to clean up some of the Nevada A-bomb test site by 2006 will not be completed until 2014. Meanwhile, the depart-



Harry
Ring

ment will continue to deliver "low level" nuclear waste from other sites for storage there until 2070.

The usual suspects — The Internal Revenue Service is authorized

to do random audits of groups of taxpayers it deems suspicious. A General Accounting Office study found that over the last three years, 85 percent of those audited nationwide had incomes below \$25,000. Couples with one child in that bracket can claim an earned income credit.

Modernizing the medieval? — With the backing of Queen Elizabeth, the British government may update the 800-year-old constitutional proviso that denies female members of the royal family equal access to the throne.

Can't read added fine print? — "Most unemployed Ca-

nadians are not eligible for unemployment insurance benefits even though they have paid premiums.... Only 43 percent of jobless workers received benefits in the 12 months to October 1997, down from 83 percent in 1989.... The human resources department could not immediately explain the downward trend." — Canada news item.

Sort of like the Third World debt — Dialogue between the cartoon couple in "Real Life Adventures."

He: "Hon, you've got your glasses on. What does this say at the bottom on our credit card statement?" She: "Interest calculated on the eternally unpaid balance."

No money in making money? — The City, London's Wall Street, was shocked when De La Rue warned its profits would be taking a heavy hit. It supplies the paper on which all United Kingdom bank notes are printed, as well as that of most Third World countries. De La Rue's honcho is taking early retirement. Maybe he'll do a trip to Asia to learn what's happening.

Wine and dine — Our local daily covered a wine auction at Christie's Beverly Hills, where a 12-pack of choice vintage went for \$48,300. The story was perched atop an ad for Kraft's macaroni and cheese. We wondered: was the layout a whimsical social comment, or

a suggested dinner menu?

Bill of Rights applies, sometimes — California parole officials backed off on revoking parole on rapper C-BO for his album, "Till My Casket Drops," which they deemed anti-cop. They did add a proviso that he not engage in gang activities, and did not rule out the possibility that "gang activities" could cover lyrics they didn't like.

Thought for the week — "We're glad justice prevailed. But I worry about the less fortunate people who can't afford a lawyer. Five years ago, would Bo been able to fight this? No." — Sandra Thomas, C-BO's wife.

Market 'reforms' exacerbate crisis, struggle in Russia

Below we print an excerpt from "Imperialism's march toward fascism and war" from the Marxist magazine *New International* no. 10. The article is based on talks by SWP national secretary Jack Barnes in 1994. *New International* is copyright © 1994 by 408 Printing and Publishing Corp., and reprinted by permission.

BY JACK BARNES

The promises by the imperialist bourgeoisie — and their imitators throughout Eastern Europe and in the former USSR — that capitalist market "reforms" would bring better living and working conditions have rapidly shown themselves to be lies. Production has fallen steeply since the opening of the nineties — by some 40 percent in Rus-

BOOK OF THE WEEK

sia; 50 percent in Ukraine; almost 25 percent in Hungary; and more in several other countries. Real wages have fallen; pensions, medical benefits, education, and other social programs have been devastated. Unemployment has risen to double-digit levels, even by official figures, which are understated. Abortion rights and job and educational opportunities for women have come under assault.

Despite the horrors meted out to working people in the name of "socialism" by the former Stalinist regimes, workers were not so badly defeated by the bureaucratic castes in these countries that they have simply been ready to acquiesce to, let alone internalize, all the culture, values, and attitudes that are necessary to the expanded reproduction of capitalist social relations.

Virtually every step by the U.S. rulers with regard to Russia over the past few years — whether advocated and guaranteed by the White House, by Congress, by university professors or Wall Street technocrats — has ended up setting back attempts by the regime there to win broader layers of working people to the glories of capitalism and has undercut Washington's chosen favorites. It's not that the U.S. rulers consciously set out to destabilize Russia. To the contrary! They aimed to collaborate with the aspiring bourgeoisie emerging out of the privileged caste in Russia to reimpose capitalism and zap the workers and other toilers. Given the decades of police-state repression by the Stalinist regimes in the USSR, the imperialist rulers assumed the working class in Russia would

be an easy mark. They condescendingly told Yeltsin to use "shock therapy" against the workers, go along with U.S. foreign policy as Gorbachev had done during the Iraq war, and turn over Russia's nuclear weapons. The job would be even easier in the rest of Central and Eastern Europe, the U.S. rulers assumed.

But Washington and other imperialist powers and agencies delivered on only a small percentage of the billions of dollars in economic assistance they pledged to Moscow and the other regimes. The "shock therapy" urged by finance capital's academic wizards and other "advisers" — wholesale plant shutdowns; elimination of food, rent, and other price subsidies; the slashing of education, pension, health, and other hard-earned and desperately needed entitlements — magnified impoverishment and social instability. The new regimes have repeatedly been forced to back off these draconian policies in fear of setting social forces in motion that could spiral beyond their control.

The big majority of toilers in these countries reveled in getting the Stalinist boot off their necks. But they are resisting efforts to make them accept as normal the joblessness, social insecurity, and dog-eat-dog competition produced and reproduced by the workings of capitalism. They're defending the social conquests that have survived in the workers state, in however tattered condition, despite decades of police-state terror and massive corruption by the petty-bourgeois castes. It's a class question.

In the past couple of months I've noticed that even opinion polls in Russia and eastern Germany reinforce this assessment. One taken by the Russian Academy of Science at the end of 1993 found that support for "economic reforms" in Russia had dropped from about 40 percent of those surveyed in 1989 to less than 25 percent. The majority of those polled agreed with the statement that "privatization is legalized theft." And according to the German Economic Ministry itself, a survey in eastern Germany in December 1993 found that support for the "market economy" had dropped to 35 percent from 77 percent in February 1990.

Of course, this doesn't mean that the working class in any of these deformed workers states has a class-struggle leadership, let alone a communist vanguard. Communist continuity was broken by the Stalinist murder machine in these countries decades ago and is yet to be reknit. As a result of Stalinism's counterrevolutionary legacy, even the most rudimentary support for socialism versus capitalism as a conscious alternative exists only among small numbers



In March of last year, thousands of workers in Russia walked off their jobs to protest months of unpaid wages. Aspiring capitalists among privileged castes throughout Eastern Europe and the former USSR have not been able to impose system of wage slavery.

of workers and youth.

But as events of the past half decade have demonstrated, it would be dead wrong to conclude that workers in these countries have been transformed into warm-blooded robots to produce surplus value for the world bourgeoisie. Neither Stalinist police terror nor the procapitalist course of the new regimes has been able to crush and atomize the working class.

Having gone through two presidents, Gorbachev and Yeltsin; too many prime ministers and cabinets to remember; and two botched coup attempts, the upshot of half a decade of U.S. imperialism's efforts to advance capitalist restoration in Russia is that

the economy and society as a whole have been driven into deeper crisis and social dislocation. As Moscow seeks to reassert dominance over the now-independent countries that once made up the USSR, rival factions among the privileged layers in those lands divide over relations with Russia. The grab for territory and resources is draped in Yugoslavia-style nationalist demagoguery on all sides. Parts of the former Soviet Union are intermittently engulfed in civil war.

But the workers in city and countryside in Russia and other former Soviet republics have not been won to the course of capitalist restoration, or to acquiescence to its consequences.

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —

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THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

March 30, 1973

TORONTO, March 18 — The Second-Cross Canada Conference for Abortion Law Repeal, sponsored by the Canadian Women's Coalition, was held here this weekend. The conference decided to call for a cross-Canada Tribunal on Abortion, Contraception, and Sterilization to be held in Ottawa Nov. 3.

The tribunal will hear testimony from victims of the reactionary Canadian abortion laws. Its objective will be to dramatize and expose the daily suffering of Canadian women because of the current laws and to build support for the abortion rights struggle.

At the end of the tribunal, participants will carry an indictment of the Canadian federal government to Parliament Hill. They will demand that the parliament act to repeal all abortion laws.

Hearings in cities across Canada will gather testimony and publicize the November tribunal.

Dr. Barbara Roberts, a national coordinator of the Women's National Abortion Action Coalition (WONAAC) in the United States told the Canadian audiences, "Anyone who questions the power of the women's movement should read the U.S. Supreme Court decision on abortion."

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

March 29, 1948

SOUTH ST. PAUL, Minn., March 23 — Mass picket lines at Swift and Armour plants stood firm here today when police attempted to gain entrance for a group of office workers into the struck plants.

Packinghouses have been shut down tight since March 16, with 6,500 workers on strike in the second largest meat packing center in the country.

Prior to this morning's demonstrations of solidarity by striking members of CIO Packinghouse Workers, [Dakota County Sheriff Norman] Dieter announced that he and South St. Paul police would attempt to enforce an injunction restraining pickets from preventing office workers and administrative personnel from going to their jobs.

Accompanied by Deputy Sheriff Charles Cherry and two South St. Paul policemen, Dieter marched up to the picket line at the Swift plant early this morning while a number of white collar employees hovered behind him.

"We want to get through," the sheriff declared. Swift pickets, 250 strong, standing shoulder to shoulder, five deep, answered with shouts of "Hold that line!" "Tighten up!" and "Don't let them through!"

None of the office workers made any attempt to enter.



New International no. 10

- Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War by Jack Barnes
- What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold by Mary-Alice Waters
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Support Puerto Rican independence

Working people around the world, especially in the United States, should support the struggle for the independence of Puerto Rico. We urge our readers to build the July 25 national march on the United Nations, which will demand freedom for the 14 Puerto Rican independence fighters imprisoned in U.S. jails and self-determination for Puerto Rico. This event will coincide with actions in other cities across the United States and in Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rico is a U.S. colony, a fact that — although widely recognized in Puerto Rico and throughout the world — the U.S. big-business press and politicians don't like to admit. It is a country — ruled by a foreign power, Washington — that cannot make its own laws, decide its own foreign policy, or control its own economic affairs.

Trampling on the rights of its residents, Washington uses Puerto Rico as a launching pad for military aggression abroad. The Clinton administration has transferred part of the U.S. Southern Command to the island and plans to construct giant radar equipment there. Meanwhile, the FBI, CIA, and other U.S. political cop agencies continue to harass independence fighters and other activists in this Caribbean nation.

The plebiscite on Puerto Rico's future currently being debated in the U.S. Congress has nothing to do with self-determination. It is simply a maneuver to continue to cover up that country's colonial status. Who is the U.S. Congress to discuss the future of the Puerto Rican nation?

In 1898 Washington seized Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines as these peoples were winning independence from Spain. Cuba was the last country to free itself from Spanish colonial rule, after peasants and former slaves fought off and defeated 500,000 Spanish troops in two wars of liberation that spanned 30 years.

But it was the Cuban revolution in 1959 that finally established the first free territory in the Americas. That revolution, which overthrew the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship, broke the grip of Yankee domination and wrested political and economic power from the exploiting classes, foreign and domestic, placing it in the hands of workers and farmers. This is how the Cuban people won true independence.

The Cuban revolution is an example for Puerto Ricans seeking their sovereignty. That is one reason why Washington is so afraid of Cuba — Puerto Ricans and others may get the same idea.

In an attempt to intimidate advocates of Puerto Rico's independence, capitalist politicians are leading an "antiterrorist" witch-hunt in the Puerto Rican community of Chicago. They seek to silence those who tell the truth about U.S. colonial rule and who fight discrimination against Puerto Ricans in the United States. This assault on Puerto Rican rights should be condemned by supporters of democratic rights.

Puerto Ricans living in Chicago, New York, and elsewhere are an integral part of the working class in the United States. That is one reason why the fight for Puerto Rico's self-determination strengthens the struggles of all working people.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Puerto Rican people's fight to end the Yankee colonial domination of their country. Last year, when China took back Hong Kong, Puerto Rico became the largest remaining colony in the world. That victory by the Chinese people was a step forward for humanity and a blow to imperialist and colonial rule everywhere.

"As long as there's one Puerto Rican who defends the idea of independence," said Cuban president Fidel Castro, "we have the moral and political duty of defending the idea of Puerto Rico's independence." This is the forthright stance the labor movement in the United States should adopt.

Free the 14 independence fighters!

Stop the witch-hunt of the Puerto Rican community in Chicago!

U.S. military, FBI, and CIA get out of Puerto Rico!

Independence for Puerto Rico!

Struggle deepens in Kosovo

Continued from Page 7

of school facilities as Milosevic promised in 1996," Jagxhiu said. The parallel university has 23,000 students. "The 'regular' university buildings are only partially filled by Serb students, but the rest of the buildings remain empty. Although the Serb government has offered lucrative loans and housing, it has managed to attract fewer than 4,000 Serb students from Serbia and Montenegro to attend classes in Kosovo. They only occupy 20 percent of the university buildings." Belgrade has also brought thousands of Serbian refugees from Bosnia to resettle in Kosovo, many of them against their will.

The failure to implement the 1996 agreement led many youth who were previously reluctant into the streets. Eleonora Halimi, for example, said she had a chance to go abroad and study but gave it up hoping the university would reopen.

"Our main difference with the Rugova leadership has been his reliance on the 'international community' and passive resistance," Jagxhiu stated, referring to statements by Rugova that amount to calls for direct military intervention by Washington and other imperialist powers.

"We are the only ones who can fight for our rights," added Driton Lajci, another student leader. After the assault in Drenica, though, "our demands for opening the schools were bypassed," Lajci said. "We have now joined other forces, including the BSPK and the political parties, in demanding independence."

Serb students join protests

A small layer of Serb students from Belgrade have joined the recent protests in Pristina. Bronislav Cale, president of the student union of the University of Belgrade, took part in the March 13 demonstration along with a handful of other students. Last year he helped lead the three-month-long student demonstrations in Belgrade that, along with other mobilizations, forced the Milosevic regime to reverse cancellation of election results in 15 cities where the opposition coalition Zajedno won municipal elections in November 1996.

"We are here to support the demands of Kosovo students for the return of their university," Cale said. He wasn't sure about the demand for independence.

"The policies of Milosevic led to the bloodshed and the breakup of Yugoslavia," said Sanja Pesek, another student from Serbia. "I consider myself a Yugoslav. We can only regain unity among working people by supporting the struggle for self-determination of the Albanian people in Kosovo."

Tijana Zivanovic, another student at the University of Belgrade who joined the March 13 action, said most of her fellow students oppose the crackdown by the Milosevic regime. This is significant given the propaganda about UCK "terrorism" in Serbia and the fact that virtually all opposition parties, including those that formed the now defunct Zajedno, have sided with the government in Belgrade on Kosovo.

During a visit to Belgrade on March 11 a number of people interviewed by *Militant* reporters expressed support for the struggle for national rights of Albanians in Kosovo. "Albanians I know are neither terrorists, nor 'lazy child breeders' as the media call them," said a Serbian taxi driver who identified himself only as Zashita. "They are hard-working people. Kosovo must get autonomy at least." This appears to be a minority view in Serbia, however. So far, only Women in Black, a group that has opposed the war unleashed by Belgrade and the breakup of Yugoslavia since the early 1990s, has organized street protests of about 100 people in Belgrade in solidarity with the embattled Albanians in Kosovo.

In Kosovo the majority of Serbs who have stayed through the last decade have privileges most of the population is denied. For the most part they live segregated from the Albanian majority and side with the Serbian regime.

The events in Drenica, however, appear to have created some cracks in this wall of chauvinism. On March 15, relatives of those killed in Drenica organized a memorial service at a small Catholic church in Pristina in honor of the victims. At the same time, more than 20,000 students and working people, overwhelmingly Albanian, held a silent candlelight protest in downtown Pristina that marched toward the church. "Most of us are Muslims, but we go to a Catholic church demonstratively to show this is a struggle for all who support justice," said Zoga Idrize. "They try to divide us, accusing Albanians of 'Islamic fundamentalism.'" Idrize and a couple of others said a few Serbians had joined the action that day.

Imperialist intervention

Meanwhile, Rugova and other leaders of Albanian political parties have stated that they will no longer settle for autonomy and have turned down an offer for negotiations by the Milosevic regime without "international mediation."

Rugova's calls for "outside help," which include imposition of new sanctions on Yugoslavia and direct military intervention, are playing into the hands of U.S. imperialism.

At a March 9 meeting in London the "Contact Group" agreed to impose a new arms embargo on Belgrade and to deny visas to those deemed responsible for repression in Kosovo. The UN Security Council is planning to vote March 20 on a British-sponsored resolution to impose an immediate arms embargo.

Russian foreign minister Yevgeni Primakov rejected a third proposal to cut financial credits to Belgrade.

During a visit to Belgrade on March 17, Milosevic met with Primakov and said Kosovo "is our internal matter and can only be solved by Serbia through political means." He urged Moscow to "oppose the internationalization of the matter." The Russian government has come into increasing conflict with Washington over expansion of NATO into Eastern Europe; preparations for a military assault on Iraq; and U.S. attempts to not only dominate the oil in the former Soviet republics of the Caspian Sea region, but to establish a stronger regional line of influence and pressure across the southern flank of Russia, from the Caspian all along the Silk Road.

The next day, the foreign ministers of France and Germany

visited Belgrade and Zagreb. "Traveling together," said the French Press Agency, "they want to reassert in front of their European allies the value of the French-German axis on the international scene." Within NATO, Paris has diverged with Washington over tactics in the Balkans and Iraq, differences that reflect the continuing U.S. push into Europe and the Middle East. In the simultaneous visit to Macedonia by Strobe Talbott, to be followed by trips to Bulgaria and Romania, Washington is laying the groundwork for deepening its intervention in the Balkans. Government officials in Skopje state that a new NATO rapid-deployment force is in the offing, based in Macedonia, that can be used in Kosovo.

Inside Kosovo, U.S. government officials are working hard toward widening illusions in "democratic capitalism." U.S. embassy officials could be seen mixing it up and talking with protesters at the March 13 mobilization.

CNN and other news programs have been highlighting out of proportion the sign "NATO: Where are you?" at the mobilizations in Pristina. During the March 13 rally and march, and the subsequent TV coverage of the action, *Militant* reporters saw only one such placard. And most people we asked said this wasn't different in previous actions. Nevertheless, attitudes toward requesting what is in fact imperialist intervention are contradictory. Many working people and youth in Kosovo have come to accept to some degree the Rugova leadership's calls for "help" from the "international community." Independent Students Union president Bujar Dugoli called for tougher sanctions against Belgrade in his March 13 speech. Belgrade is in fact using these attitudes to exploit anti-imperialist sentiment among people in Serbia and the deep opposition there to the UN sanctions to claim that the rebellion in Kosovo is nothing but a NATO plot.

"I think the U.S. should help us get our country, but not by sending an army," said Aryana, a high school student who gave only her first name on her way to the protest.

"I know this power has its own interests," said university student Agron Camolli, referring to Washington. "But we are a few people facing a strong army. The U.S. is the only one that can help."

Faredi Ibrahim disagreed. "We don't need NATO or the European Union," he said. "Where were they when Germany and other countries were expelling Albanians? We rely on our own strength to stop the terror by Milosevic."

Resistance by working people

This fighting spirit permeated most discussions with student organizers and working people interviewed by the *Militant*. It is among workers that we found those most determined to defend the remaining gains of the 1945 revolution and use them to advance the struggle for self-determination.

During the visit to the mining town Mitrovica March 14, Mon Uka and his wife Shemsie showed *Militant* reporters into their front yard. Behind a tall wooden fence, they live in one small room with a dirt floor along with their two children. Uka had been saving money to build a house on this plot of land. But he was fired from his job in a nearby mine for going on strike in August 1990, along with 2,750 fellow workers. There has been no work, especially in the winter months. Many miners have been surviving ever since on solidarity organized through the unemployed league of the union. The miners union has been organizing a fund for the fired workers and distributing the money. Contributions come mostly from the 500 miners who have emigrated abroad in the last eight years. Asked if he took part in the student protests in town, he replied: "Is there any reason anyone wouldn't protest? Especially when our brothers and sisters are being killed in Drenica."

Shashivar Begu, secretary of the miners union in the region, who worked in the mines for 18 years before being fired himself, recounted how the workers occupied the mine for eight days, sitting underground during the 1990 strike. "We struck demanding a return to the 1974 constitution [autonomy for Kosovo], an end to firings or early retirements of teachers for political reasons that had already begun, and new elections for new union officers. We only came out of the mine when Serbian authorities gave us what turned out to be false promises they would meet our demands."

The attempts by the Serbian authorities to sell off one of the mines to foreign investors "is the biggest robbery," Begu said. "Since 1945, we the workers are the owners." The mineral wealth of Kosovo includes coal, silver, gold, zinc, lead, and bismuth. "It is for these riches that the Serbian regime is occupying our territory, not for their churches," he said. Begu was referring to a rationalization by Belgrade for the denial of national rights to Albanians — that Kosovo historically belongs to Serbia because it was the site of a battle four centuries ago where the armies of the Ottoman empire defeated Serb armies, an argument pushed by the Serbian Orthodox church.

Begu said Kosovo miners "have received support, including material help, from unions internationally. But more is needed." The recent police clampdown in the area prevented miners union representatives here from participating in a conference against privatization called by the Independent Miners Union in Tuzla, Bosnia, that weekend. According to a Greek trade unionist who took part in the meeting, that conference included representatives of the Independent Trade Union of Serbia and passed a resolution calling for solidarity with the Kosovo miners.

Despite the hardships, "we don't regret for a moment the 1990 strike," Begu said. "We will continue to fight," he added, pointing to how the miners and other workers in the area have joined the student protests. "And there's a good chance we will win."

Natasha Terlexis is a member of the Foreign Airlines Workers Union in Athens, Greece. Anne Howie, a member of the Transport and General Workers Union in Manchester, England, and Jack Willey contributed to this article.

Meeting of socialist oil workers discusses Crown lockout

BY JERRY FREIWIRTH

HOUSTON — The two-year-long fight of oil workers locked out by Crown Central Petroleum Corp. just outside Houston served as a centerpiece for discussions at a recent meeting here of socialist workers who are members of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers Union.

"Despite everything, these workers refuse to give up," said Patti Iiyama, a refinery worker at Lyondell-Citgo in Houston, in a report on the Crown situation that opened the meeting. "Nearly 200 of the 251 locked-out workers and their families still staff the picket line at Crown every week."

It is important not to view the Crown fight in isolation, Iiyama said. "This is part of the bosses' attacks against workers at home, which is the opposite side of the same coin as their drive against workers abroad, like their war plans in Iraq." The fight of the locked-out Crown workers should also be viewed in the context of the recent contract rejection by the Caterpillar workers and the strike by the Teamsters against Honeywell in Minnesota, she said. "These are all signs that the long retreat by U.S. workers has bottomed out."

Crown Central Petroleum locked out its unionized workers, members of OCAW Local 4-227, on Feb. 5, 1996 during contract negotiations in which the company pressed for a series of deep concessions by the union. At the heart of these was Crown's demand to lay off workers at the company's whim, without regard to seniority. Leading up to the contract deadline, workers in the catalytic cracking unit organized a march of 175 union members to the refinery's administration building. The bosses called in the cops. A week later Crown broke off negotiations and walked workers out of the plant.

"To justify their preemptive attack on the union," Iiyama explained, "Crown charged the workers with sabotaging process equipment. They claimed more than 400 incidents of actual or planned sabotage. These charges

are wholly false, and the unionists have a convincing item-by-item refutation. But when the union brought this before the National Labor Relations Board, they were told Crown did not need any proof to justify their lockout. All that was required was that the company officials 'believed' that sabotage might be possible!"

Since industrial vandalism at an energy-producing plant is a federal offense, the FBI opened an investigation of the charges more than a month later. Crown workers reported to fellow unionists that they were visited at their homes and questioned, sometimes in the early morning. Quite a few reportedly refused to talk with the FBI. In desperation, Crown offered a \$20,000 reward for anyone who would implicate other workers in sabotage. When they found no takers for this bribe, the offer was raised to \$60,000. There were still no takers and the FBI was unable to find or concoct evidence for any indictment, but they have not closed the case.

Crown claims the workers in the plant showed disregard for the health and safety of the working-class neighborhoods surrounding the plant, where many of them live and where Crown has routinely released chemicals over the years. They have been running the plant since the lockout with nearly full production, using a combination of supervisors, secretaries, contract operators, and other scabs. They are bringing in young people right out of community college operations classes at about half the pay that union members received. A report issued by the OCAW and a local environmental group presents convincing evidence that Crown's already high pollution emissions tripled since the lockout.

Local 4-227 has laid plans to go door-to-door in the surrounding neighborhoods, which are heavily Chicano and *mexicano*, to explain the truth about Crown's pollution record and enlist their support in a common fight against the company's greed.

The gathering of socialist oil and chemical workers also discussed the importance of the civil lawsuit filed on January 15 by Crown against 14 locked-out workers, an officer of the OCAW local, and the local itself, charging sabotage and conspiracy. The union on February 25 filed a motion to dismiss in Federal District Court. Defendants, other locked-out Crown workers, and OCAW members in the region have begun a serious discussion about how to defend the charged workers and the union. Many are concerned that a judgment victimizing the Crown workers and their union would weaken all unions in the area and perhaps present an excuse for the FBI to reopen its criminal investigation.

Over the course of the two-day meeting a number of participants joined the picket lines at Crown. "Even though not all the workers are sure about what to do next," explained Jim Altenberg, a refinery operator in Avon, California, "what impresses you is their determination to continue the fight. And a real discussion is taking place about what to do next, how to link up with other workers under attack along the Houston Ship Channel."

The socialists reviewed other recent developments in the union movement. Alyson



Militant/Jamila Williams

More than 500 people marched in Selma, Alabama, March 8 to commemorate the Civil Rights march known as "Bloody Sunday." The 1965 march, which was aimed at winning voting rights for Blacks in Alabama, was attacked by state cops who brutally beat the marchers. News of the assault helped galvanize support for the civil rights battle being waged there. In August of 1965 the Voting Rights Act was passed, marking an important victory in the struggle against the Jim Crow system of segregation. At the March 8 demonstration, veterans of the civil rights movement joined students, workers, political activists, and others. The action was sponsored by the National Voting Rights museum in Selma.

Kennedy from Chicago reported on her discussions with Caterpillar workers in Peoria, Illinois, as they went to vote on a proposed contract. "It was voted down by a large margin, which set back Caterpillar. The people I talked to voted in solidarity with the 50 workers illegally terminated by Caterpillar for their strike activities."

Oil workers discuss war on Iraq

Participants at the meeting discussed at some length the recent UN agreement imposed on Iraq. "The accords brokered by the United Nations will do nothing to bring peace," said Joel Britton, a worker in the wet corn-milling industry from Chicago who presented the main political report. "This agreement, in fact, further legitimizes a U.S. military assault. The U.S. armed forces in the Gulf are on a hair trigger, waiting for the slightest pretext to launch a murderous bombing campaign of Iraq."

One oil worker from Houston described discussions in his refinery control room as an "on-again, off-again 'town meeting.'" Opinions are all over the map, from sharp opposition to going to war to calls for marching on Baghdad." Another participant explained, "There's a growing cynicism about the reasons the Clinton administration offers to justify going to war. Many of my co-workers believe it's really about oil."

Britton responded to this remark in his report, commenting, "certainly the massive oil reserves of the region play an important role in Washington's real motivations for planning to assault Iraq. But it can't be reduced to oil. Perhaps the principal reason the U.S. government is determined to install a client regime in Iraq is its need to prepare for a war against the workers of Russia."

At a Militant Labor Forum at the Houston Pathfinder Bookstore, which the socialist oil workers attended, Ma'mud Shirvani elaborated on the connection with the former Soviet Union. "The imperialist ruling classes thought they could reintroduce capitalism into these workers states," he said. "But this hasn't worked; economic means alone are insufficient. While there are still debates in ruling circles, a growing majority believe that only direct military intervention can

accomplish this goal." The war moves in the Gulf, Shirvani explained, are similar to the expansion of NATO forces to the Russian borders in Europe. This is the meaning of President Clinton's and U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright's arrogant proclamation of the U.S. as 'the only indispensable nation.' It's why they have begun associating Russia with the so-called "rogue states."

Assessing common political work

"When we met here in Houston in January our assessment was that we weren't getting the job done," said Eli Green, a pipe fitter at an oil refinery in Los Angeles, who presented a report on future tasks. "In that sense we weren't fully prepared to meet the challenge posed by Washington's war drive," he explained. "Our record since then indicates that we've begun to turn this around. Looking at our work over the recent weeks, we've begun to close the gap between word and deed."

Socialist oil workers made real steps forward in distributing the *Militant* and other communist literature on the job as a part of opposing imperialism's looming war against Iraq, in bringing co-workers to antiwar pickets and other political activities, and in fighting shoulder to shoulder with fellow workers under the gun in the United States, like at Crown.

Seventy-seven copies of the *Militant* were sold on the job since the January meeting, as well as 14 copies of the Marxist magazine *New International* no 7, which details the 1990-91 Gulf War. Socialist OCAW members were less successful in their campaign to sell the recently issued Pathfinder pamphlet, *Celebrating the Homecoming of Ernesto Che Guevara*, and a discussion was held on how to upgrade the effort to tell the truth about the Cuban revolution.

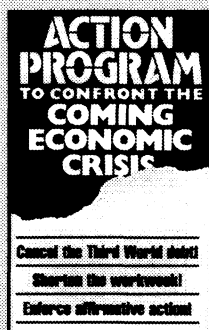
The meeting adopted goals for participation in the upcoming *Militant* subscription campaign and secured initial pledges in excess of \$8,000 towards the projected Militant Fund Drive beginning March 14.

Jerry Freiwirth is a member of OCAW Local 4-367 in Deer Park, Texas.

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LETTERS

Arab-Persian Gulf

It is politically incorrect to use the term Persian Gulf. This term is derived from a period in history when the Persian Empire dominated the region and the Arab masses were subjects of the shahs, the monarchs who ruled Iran until the 1979 revolution.

The designation Persian Gulf does not represent the composition of the peoples of the region. In fact, it was challenged by the Arab masses in the mid-1970s, who demanded the usage of the term Arabian Gulf. This created diplomatic tension between Iran and the Arab countries along the Gulf. Iran withdrew all its ambassadors from the

Arab countries. It also threatened to prevent the flying of passenger planes belonging to a joint venture airline owned by the Arab nations, which was to be named Arabian Gulf Airways.

The dispute was presented to the United Nations. With the support of the imperialist countries, especially the United States, it was decided that Persian would be the legitimate name for the Gulf. Under pressure from the late Shah, the Arab nations withdrew their demands and the airline was renamed Gulf Air.

It is noteworthy that the terminology used in *New International* (NI) no. 7, for example, refers to the region as the Arab-Persian Gulf. This

is absolutely correct, as it describes the region and reflects the composition of the peoples who inhabit it.

As Washington intensifies its threats of war against the Iraqi people, the Gulf region becomes a focal point in world news. As always, we must be clear on our views and politics, and this clarity must be reflected in the language and terminology we use. Use of the term Persian Gulf is not only incorrect, but is also a term that reflects imperialism's support of the late Shah. The *Militant* is not consistent in its usage. The most recent example is on the front page of issue no. 9. The editorial uses the term Arab-Persian Gulf, while the article

"Peace" deal sets hair trigger for war" uses the term Persian Gulf.

I believe that class-conscious workers and youth, its publications and spokespersons, should use the language in the NI no. 7.

Ahmad Haghighat
Toronto, Ontario

[The Militant editors agree. Despite some recent lapses, our policy remains to use the term Arab-Persian Gulf.]

Who is biggest murderer?

Given how the United States has poisoned everything with chemicals that cause brain tumors to breast cancer to Leukemia to who knows

how many neurological and mental disorders; why is the focus only on the tobacco industry?

If Uncle Sam was held accountable for each person his poison has murdered, the United States would be the biggest mass murderer in history.

J.L.
Minneapolis, Minnesota

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Youth protest government austerity and price hikes across Indonesia

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

A protest movement against government austerity measures and worsening economic conditions is developing among students in Indonesia. During the first two weeks in March, thousands of students rallied daily across Java and other islands in that country of more than 200 million people. Some 10,000 students rallied in Yogyakarta March 11 along with actions six other cities, to protest the swearing-in of President Suharto.

"When the protests began last month, there were no ties between campuses; schools competed with each other to hold bigger rallies," said an Indonesian student activist. "Now meetings are being held among people from different campuses and with outside [organizations]."

Students stress the solidarity they are attempting to build with peasants and workers. Last October Indonesian students rallied outside the Bulog — the state monopoly that regulates food prices — demanding the resignation of its director and a price freeze on staple foods. A week later 16,000 aerospace workers in Bandung, Indonesia, went on strike and organized rallies protesting threatened layoffs.

The Indonesian rupiah has plunged by about 80 percent against the U.S. dollar since a wave of currency devaluations in the region began last July. Many Asian companies borrowed heavily in dollars and were forced to repay loans with diminishing export earnings. The devalued currency has paralyzed many businesses and inflation has soared, sparking food riots across the country. Some 10 million workers, many of them less than 30 years old, are expected to be jobless this year.

While the demonstrations have focused on the doubling and tripling of food prices, the protesters have begun demanding Suharto resign. During the March 11 rally in Yogyakarta at Gadjah Mada University, students replaced their demands for lower prices with chants of "Down with Suharto!"

That same day Suharto called for workers and peasants to tighten their belts, while at the same time telling them accept the reality that "some of us may lead an affluent life." Taking his oath of office for a seventh five-year term, he told the 1,000 People's Consultative Assembly, "We will never enjoy again an economic growth such as we have experienced for more than the past quarter of a century."

Students have begun to debate the risks of confronting the police and armed forces, and what course of action to take when the military-imposed ban on mass actions ends March 18. Their protests have largely been confined to the campuses.

"The big split is between those who want to take it to the streets, and those who fear this could set off a volcano," one student activist who declined to be identified told the *Wall Street Journal*. Nurhadi, a student



Students threw rocks at cops during March 16 protest at National University in Jakarta

leader at Gadjah Mada University said marching in the streets is "too dangerous," although 40 percent of the students want to protest off the campus.

During a recent demonstration at Indonesian Christian University, a wave of student protesters began marching toward the school's front gate. A panicked university dean grabbed the microphone and shouted,

"In these gates, I am responsible for you. Outside, I have no responsibility." On March 16 students at the National University in Jakarta hurled rocks at the police during a protest.

To prepare for these confrontations, Washington has been training Indonesian soldiers in a special forces commando unit called Kopassus, which has tortured and

killed civilians. That commando unit includes the Red Berets trained by the Pentagon, who have been deployed against street protests in Jakarta this year. The Pentagon has also trained Kostrad, an army strategic command group that controls the center of Java and Suharto's presidential guard.

Meanwhile, Jakarta continued defiance at implementing the austerity program demanded by the U.S.-led \$43 billion International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan arrangement has sharpened tensions among its imperial masters. "The U.S. and other governments must now start considering seriously how far it is worth propping up a regime that may well be on its way out," chided the editors of London's *Financial Times* March 12. The big-business daily dubbed the crisis there a "real headache."

Officials from the United States, Japan, Germany, and the IMF have been meeting in Jakarta to pressure the regime into imposing the "basic conditions" of the "bail-out package" negotiated last October. The Australian government, however, is demanding its imperialist partners ease some of the requirements attached to the IMF deal. Australian foreign minister Alexander Downer said March 17 that some of the IMF demands would "tear apart Indonesia's social fabric." A spokesman for Downer noted, "We are the developed nation closest to Indonesia, and we stand the most to lose from the crisis."

Chicago hearings try to witch-hunt Puerto Rican independence activists

BY FRANK FORRESTAL AND ELIZABETH STONE

CHICAGO — Protesting a year-long witch-hunt of the Puerto Rican community, 100 people gathered March 4 at the State of Illinois Office Building in downtown Chicago, the site of hearings organized by Democratic State Representative Edgar Lopez. The hearings are part of a series of attacks on Puerto Rican activists that began a year ago. In February 1997 the *Chicago Sun-Times*, one of the two big-business dailies in the city, raised a hue and cry on its front pages claiming state funds were used at Roberto Clemente High School to "support a campaign to promote Puerto Rican independence and free convicted terrorists."

Examples cited included the invitation of Puerto Rican poets Avotcja Jitonlro and Piri Thomas, who is also author of the acclaimed novel *Down These Mean Streets*. According to the *Sun-Times*, "they were booked not only to lecture students, but also to perform at two evening poetry readings from which proceeds went to an organization working

to free the FALN (Armed Forces of National Liberation) terrorists."

In the wake of the *Sun-Times* attack, Illinois House Majority leader Michael Madigan announced the creation of a committee with subpoena powers to investigate the charges made in the press. The head of the witch-hunt committee, Rep. Lopez, is an advocate of statehood for Puerto Rico. Several government agencies, including the Illinois State Police, the FBI, and the Internal Revenue Service, were also called on to participate in the investigation.

Lopez asserts that the hearings will result in "criminal charges." A special target is the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, a community organization that has held some classes for Clemente. The center is headed by José López, a longtime activist in support of Puerto Rican independence. López's brother, Oscar López, is one of 14 Puerto Rican political prisoners held in U.S. jails.

To enter the hearings people had to pass through police, a metal detector, and a search of personal belongings. More than 250 people attended the two-day hearings, including many Clemente students.

The main event the first day was the testimony of Rafael Marrero, a former Puerto Rican independence activist and a government informer. From 1989 to 1994 Marrero worked at the Puerto Rican Cultural Center. Cited in testimony by Marrero as evidence of misuse of funds was spending for student trips to Puerto Rico, a legal clinic at the school, presentations by pro-independence speakers and artists, and a school bulletin that noted such days as the birthdays of Malcolm X and Ho Chi Minh, as well as May 1, International Workers Day.

During the first day, about 10 people were removed from the hearing. Despite this, the audience found ways to make their opposition known. Marrero was interrupted during his testimony by a member of the audience who chanted, "Hey, hey, ho, ho, McCarthyism has got to go." After receiving applause from most people in the room, this person was ejected from the hearing.

Marrero is the FBI's main witness against Jose Solís Jordan, a professor at the University of Puerto Rico and former faculty member at DePaul University, is being framed up on charges of attempting to bomb a military recruitment center.

On the second day of the hearings, an "educator" testified that the curriculum at Clemente was "too political." Patricia Boland, another teacher at Clemente, complained that school board meetings were conducted in Spanish.

José López, who sat through the hearings, was denied his request to speak before the panel. "What we have here, in my opinion, is a total witch-hunt," said López. "This was an orchestrated kangaroo court."

Despite Edgar Lopez's claim of evidence for criminal charges, according to the *Chicago Tribune*, "several members of the state panel said they were still unclear if any laws had been broken." More hearings are scheduled for later this year.

Elizabeth Stone is a member of the International Association of Machinists.

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